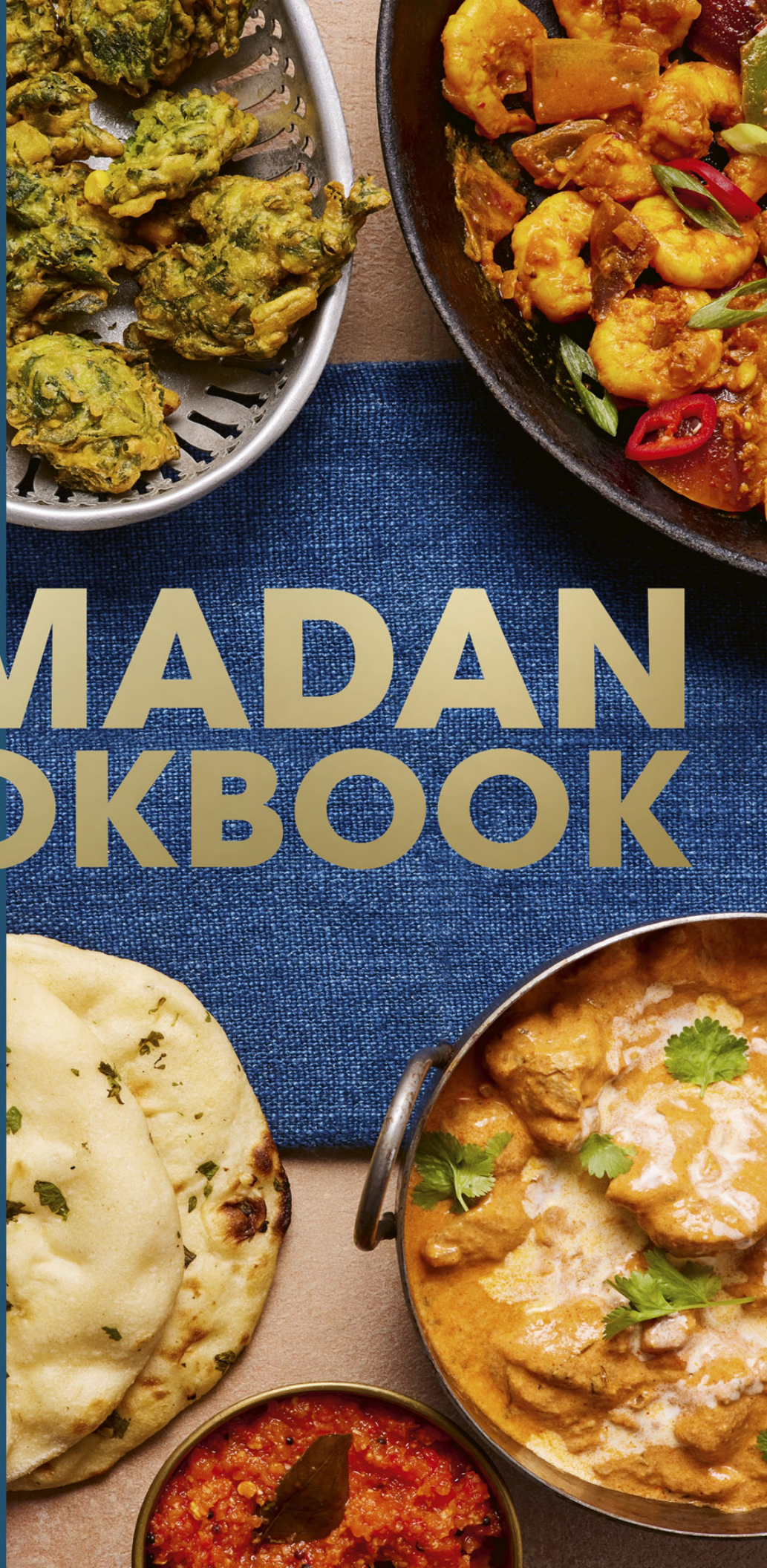
the RAMADAN COOKBOOK

80 delicious recipes perfect for Ramadan, Eid and celebrating throughout the year

ANISA KAROLIA



About the Author

Anisa Karolia is one of the UK's most popular Muslim food bloggers, sharing all of her favourite authentic recipes since 2015. She has a community of over 240,000 followers worldwide and was a British Muslim Award winner for digital activity in 2020.

Through her various platforms, Anisa's mission is to share quick and easy recipes, and she especially

loves to share those all-time family favourites that she enjoyed growing up with.

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Introduction

Growing up in a family of foodies, cooking and talking recipes has always been a major part of life for me. My earliest fond memories are of spending my summer holidays and free time with my beloved late grandmother Mariam. She was one of the earliest Indian settlers in Leicester in the 1950s; she was very kind and generous and would give everyone in the neighbourhood invites (Dawat) to the house to eat. For that reason, she was very well known and loved, and to this day is still remembered by so many people I meet.

I was fortunate and blessed to have spent lots of my spare time with her, especially in the kitchen. Her cooking combined influences from Indian

culture (from where she moved to the UK), and the Malawi style of cooking (where she was born and grew up). I remember just before iftar in Ramadan, she would tell me to wait a few more minutes while she fried up fresh pakoras or samosas to give to the neighbours. Or she'd give some to me to take back home, which I did with a big grin as I took charge of a plate of hot deliciousness wrapped in kitchen paper. It's a tradition I carry on to this day, sending our kids with food to share with our neighbours so our kids also learn the values and importance of kindness and generosity. I'm sure many UK Indian kids who grew up in the 1980s can relate to this! I guess that was the beginning of my beautiful relationship with food and cooking.

My dear mother Amina was born and bred in the UK, but had lots of experience perfecting the art of Indian cooking with my gran, who she'd help in the kitchen. I remember going through my mum's handwritten recipe books and making my own version of my favourite recipes. I would always be asking what she was cooking as I stepped inside the house after school – the delicious aroma always made me smile as I walked through our home.

My early attempts at cooking, helping my mum in the kitchen, would often end up in a mess – either on the worktop or the recipe itself! However, my mother never discouraged me and let me carry on learning from my mistakes. Folding a basic samosa triangle was so intimidating back then, and my roti were the shape of a country on a map. But after lots of practice and before long, they were nice and round! I tell these stories to so many youngsters: never be afraid of cooking, and keep trying. Help your parents in the kitchen, follow a book, watch a video – however you feel comfortable. You will surely create magic in the kitchen if you have the interest and appetite for it!

My father Nazir also has a great love of food and would often get involved, from finding the best-quality veg at the local grocery store (being fussy, he was good at that!), to giving his opinions on recipes and baking his speciality, Cardamom Cake, which he still makes to this day. It's really good, and delicious with a good cup of Indian chai!

I guess one of the things that brought my husband Adam and I together was our shared love of good food. I already knew that my lovely

mother-in-law Yasmin was an amazing and experienced cook and her food was always well received and complimented by others. She spent her early years in Zomba, Malawi, and like me, also spent time in the kitchen with her own dear mother. She was passionate about cooking from a young age and, like my own grandmother, she also loved cooking for guests, trying out new recipes and often putting her own twist on things!

With this background, you can see how my influences and style of cooking developed and evolved. Many of the dishes I make are from Surat (in India) but others are from Malawi or South Africa. I feel so fortunate to have been able to enjoy and learn how to cook amazing food, learning from so many experts and chefs in my own family.

After my third child, I left my job with a view to working from home. I absolutely loved art at school so I used my creative flair together with my passion for baking to start a cake business, posting a portfolio of my work on my Instagram. After a while, I started getting messages asking for baking advice or recipes for cakes – I really couldn't deny anyone good cake, so I started uploading my baking recipes.

It was at that point that I decided I wanted others to be able to enjoy great-tasting Indian food too, from my favourite meals from my own childhood, to my family's regularly requested dishes today.

The previous generation were so experienced in cooking that they never really needed to write anything down and I've heard so many people my age say that if they ever asked an elder for a recipe, the response was often, `Oh a bit of this and a bit of that'. With that in mind, and at the suggestion of others, I started uploading full recipes on my Instagram account. This was at a time when food blogging wasn't even a thing. The recipes soon became very popular as I started with what seemed to me to be the most difficult dishes or the ones no one would share the recipe for, especially the Ramadan and Eid recipes! I wanted every person to be able to appreciate amazing food and to cook delicious, hearty dishes in the comfort of their own home without feeling intimidated by the whole process.

I slowly became known for sharing my authentic Indian dishes, those handed down through the generations, so everyone could enjoy the mouth-watering vibrant food I love. My friends and family soon suggested I start a YouTube channel

and share video content on my recipes. Anyone who knows me will tell you how shy and conservative I am and I thought, no way can I do that! My earliest videos were very cheesy and cringe-worthy, but with my husband Adam's help with the technical side of things (and his role as Chief Taster), we made it happen and have never looked back since.

For me, it was about trying to help and inspire people to create the incredible authentic recipes I grew up with. I think it's an important life skill for people to be able to make home-cooked food for themselves or their family. I love interacting with my audience, seeing their photos of the recipes they have recreated – the positive feedback actually inspires me to continue with my journey in sharing lots of creative and delicious recipes.

Among the recipes in this book are some that have stuck with me since childhood, and others that are modern recipes with a twist. All can be enjoyed throughout Ramadan – from suhoor to iftar – including the celebration of Eid. The recipes are so versatile, though, that you and your family can enjoy the everyday meals in this book any

time of year. I really do hope you enjoy these recipes as much as we do!

A note before we begin on all the recipes. Where oil is in the ingredients, you can use any flavourless type (I use sunflower) unless otherwise specified.

Anisa x

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What Ramadan Means to Me

Ramadan, for me, is about getting closer to my Creator. It's about self-reflection, charity, sacrifice, family and thinking of those less fortunate. It's about fasting as a form of physical and spiritual detox, giving me the opportunity to engage myself and really increase my God Consciousness, removing bad habits and starting some good ones.

Of course, food is also a big part of Ramadan as Muslims around the world abstain from eating between sunrise and sunset, starting the day with the pre-dawn meal of suhoor, then spending time in the kitchen, usually with family members, preparing something for the evening. There is also

the tradition of distributing prepared food to neighbours, sharing your blessings and sharing the love.

In Islam, cooking for your family is rewarded with blessings, as you are sacrificing your time and energy to feed your loved ones. With that in mind, to help and prepare you in Ramadan, Eid and your everyday cooking throughout the year, I have included in this book some of my favourite tried-and-tested recipes, with plenty of batch-cooking ideas you can prepare in advance and freeze until required, freeing up some of your valuable time in Ramadan for prayers and worship.

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Recipe List

Caramelized Bananas on Brioche Toast
Date & Nut Slices
Banana, Date & Oat Smoothie
Folded Omelette with Baby Tomatoes & Feta
Shakshuka
Cheesy Chicken Muffins
Fried Eggs with Peppers & Za'atar

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Caramelized Bananas on Brioche Toast

SERVES
1–2

TIME
Prep 5 minutes
Cook 4 minutes

Delicious, buttery and sweet, this simple breakfast takes very little effort. Decadent caramelized bananas are served on crisp-on-the-outside and soft-on-the-inside brioche toast. This was my dad's favourite – we always had a bunch of bananas in the fruit basket. My dad made the best caramelized bananas, which he served warm with a drizzle of fresh cream and a slightly charred and crisp roti. A perfect breakfast, a tasty and filling way to start your day and ready on the table in just 10 minutes.

Ingredients

25g butter
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 banana, halved lengthways

BRIOCHE
60ml full-fat milk

1 egg, beaten
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1-2 slices of brioche or white bread
15g butter

Method

Place a small frying pan on a low heat, add the butter and sugar and heat for about 1 minute until melted. Place the banana halves in the pan cut side down and cook for about 1 minute on each side until nice and golden, carefully using a spatula to turn the pieces, making sure not to mush them.

Pour the milk into a bowl with the beaten egg, cinnamon and sugar and whisk together. Dip the slice of brioche in the milk mixture and soak for 30 seconds on each side, just enough time to soak the egg mixture into the bread.

Melt the butter in another frying pan on a low heat. Gently transfer the brioche to the pan, increase the heat slightly and cook until golden brown, about 2 minutes on each side. Serve immediately, topped with the banana halves and the sauce from the pan spooned over the top.

You could also add a dollop of clotted cream or whipped cream, a drizzle of maple syrup or some fresh fruits and berries.

Caramelized Bananas on Brioche Toast

Date & Nut Slices

MAKES
28

TIME
Prep 10 minutes
Cook 10 minutes
Chill 1 hour

Start your day with these delicious, nutritious slices. Perfect for Ramadan, for suhoor or iftar, they are rich in vitamins and minerals and packed with lots of energy. These will help suppress sugar cravings and you control your appetite through the day.

Ingredients

50g butter
250g pitted dates, finely chopped
50g granulated sugar
20g chopped pistachios
20g chopped almonds
20g chopped cashews
50g Marie biscuits or digestive biscuits, broken into pieces
sesame seeds, for sprinkling

Method

Melt the butter in a saucepan on a low heat and add the dates and sugar. Cook until the dates soften and start to look mushy. This will take 8–10 minutes. Add the chopped nuts and biscuits and stir everything together.

Take a sheet of baking paper and lay out flat. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and place the date mixture on top. Roll into a log shape, using the paper to help make a tight roll. Chill in the fridge for 1 hour until firm, then cut into 1cm slices. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2–3 weeks.

Date & Nut Slices

Banana, Date & Oat Smoothie

SERVES
1

TIME
Prep 2 minutes

Naturally sweet, this smoothie is the perfect way to start your suhoor. So easy to whip up and made with just a handful of ingredients, it's rich in fibre, creamy and satisfying.

Ingredients

1 banana
2 pitted Medjool dates
250ml semi-skimmed milk
2 tablespoons rolled oats
½ teaspoon chia seeds

Method

Put all the ingredients in a blender and blend on high for 30–40 seconds until the ingredients are well combined and smooth. That's it! Pour and enjoy.

TIP You can use any milk you like – the recipe works just as well with full-fat dairy, almond or soy milk.

Folded Omelette with Baby Tomatoes & Feta

SERVES
1

TIME
Prep 5 minutes
Cook 2 minutes

A simple yet satisfying omelette filled with juicy, sweet baby tomatoes and tangy, crumbly feta. You can make this omelette any time of the day, but it makes a great breakfast, whatever you're doing. This will definitely keep you full for longer.

Ingredients

2 eggs
splash of milk
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon chilli flakes
oil spray, for greasing
5–6 baby tomatoes, quartered
50g feta cheese, crumbled

Method

Whisk the eggs in a bowl and add a splash of milk, the salt, pepper and chilli flakes.

Place a small frying pan on a medium heat and spray in some oil to cover the base of the pan. Pour in the egg mixture and cook for 1 minute until the bottom sets. Sprinkle the tomatoes over one half of the omelette and crumble over the feta. As the egg cooks, the edges will start to lift from the sides of the pan. Use a spatula to fold the other half of the omelette over the filling, cook for 1 minute more and you're ready to plate up.

You can try other fillings in this omelette, such as grated Cheddar cheese and wilted spinach – whatever appeals to you.

Shakshuka

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 10 minutes
Cook 18 minutes

Shakshuka is a simple vegetarian dish, quick and easy to rustle up. The gently poached eggs nestle in a delicious chunky tomato and pepper sauce – it's so satisfying, you can serve it for breakfast, lunch or even dinner. Serve with bread.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 red onions, diced
½ red pepper, diced
1 fresh red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
½ teaspoon mild chilli powder
1 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika
1 teaspoon garlic paste
400g tin of chopped or plum tomatoes
4 eggs
salt

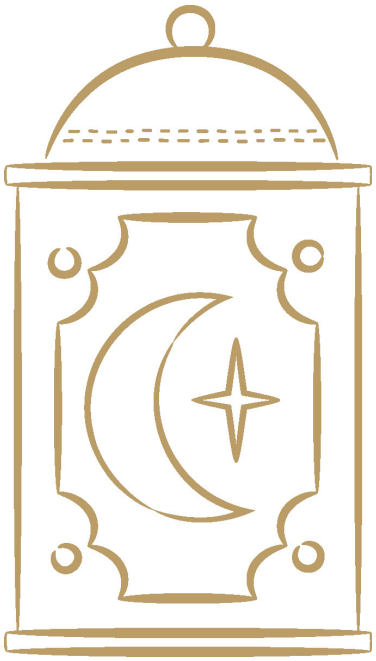
fresh coriander leaves chopped, to garnish

Method

Heat the oil in a frying pan on a low-medium heat and add the onions. Cook for 3–5 minutes to soften, then add the red pepper, fresh chilli, chilli powder, paprika and garlic paste. Stir in the tomatoes, season with salt, then bubble away for 8–10 minutes until nice and fragrant.

Using the back of a large spoon, make 4 dips in the sauce, then crack an egg into each one. Put a lid on the pan, then cook gently on a low heat for 6–8 minutes until the eggs are done to your liking. Scatter with the coriander leaves and serve.

You will need a frying pan with a lid for this dish. If you don't have a lid, cover the pan with foil instead.



Shakshuka

Cheesy Chicken Muffins

MAKES
12

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 45 minutes

Soft, moist, cheesy and super-delicious, these savoury muffins are great for a grab-and-go breakfast – so filling and so addictive.

Ingredients

knob of butter
300g chicken breast, cut into 1cm cubes
½ teaspoon dried mixed herbs
1 teaspoon garlic paste
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
250g plain flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
250ml milk
50g plain yogurt
1 large egg
200g Cheddar cheese, grated
2 tablespoons diced red pepper
2 tablespoons diced green pepper
2 tablespoons finely chopped spring onion

100g tinned sweetcorn kernels, drained

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4) and line a 12-hole muffin tin with 12cm squares of baking paper.

Melt a knob of butter in a saucepan on a low-medium heat. Add the chicken, mixed herbs, garlic paste, salt and pepper, cover and cook for 15 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through. Your kitchen will be smelling so good right now.

Whisk the flour with the baking powder in a large bowl. Whisk the milk with the yogurt and egg in a separate bowl, then pour the wet ingredients into the bowl with the dry ingredients. Add the cooked chicken, cheese, red and green peppers, spring onion and sweetcorn and mix everything together until combined – the batter should be smooth and thick.

Divide the batter evenly between the holes in the muffin tin and cook in the oven for 30 minutes or until the muffins are golden and crusty and spring back when touched. Cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack. Serve warm.

These muffins can be stored in the fridge for 4–5 days, so you can make them ahead of time. Warm them up in the microwave for 1 minute before serving.

Add a chopped red chilli for a bit of kick if you like.

Cheesy Chicken Muffins

Fried Eggs with Peppers & Za'atar

SERVES
1–2

TIME
Prep 5 minutes
Cook 4 minutes

Fried eggs with a Middle Eastern twist, simple yet tasty. Za'atar is a very popular spice blend – herby, earthy and fragrant. What I absolutely love about eggs is that they don't have to be boring, you can jazz them up with just about anything. Serve these delicious spicy fried eggs with toast to set you up for the day.

Ingredients

30g unsalted butter
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon diced red pepper
1 tablespoon diced green pepper
1 tablespoon chopped spring onion
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon chilli flakes
½ teaspoon za'atar spice mix

Method

Melt the butter in a small frying pan on a medium heat. Crack the eggs into the pan, sprinkle over the red and green peppers, spring onion, salt, black pepper, chilli flakes and za'atar. Cover and cook until the eggs are cooked to your liking – about 2 minutes for runny yolks, or 4 minutes for well done. Serve immediately.

TIP Pair up with sliced avocado and quartered baby tomatoes, the perfect combo to start your day.

Fried Eggs with Peppers & Za’atar

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Recipe List

Spicy Potato & Sweetcorn Tortilla Samosas
Chicken & Piccalilli Squares
Jalapeño & Chicken Samosas
Chicken Croquettes
Keema Pies
Dynamite Prawns
Lamb & Mint Buns
Hariyali Chicken
Crispy Pakoras
Salmon Pakoras
Chinese-style Spring Rolls
Veggie Pizza Pinwheels
Chicken Bread Rolls

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Spicy Potato & Sweetcorn Tortilla Samosas

SERVES
8–10

TIME
Prep 45 minutes
Cook 14 minutes

There is something so satisfying about a good old-fashioned vegetarian samosa. My samosas, with spicy potatoes and sweetcorn, are wrapped in ready-made tortillas so you're good to go in no time at all! These can be enjoyed any time – they are perfect for batch-cooking and freezing, so ideal for iftar, but they are delicious throughout the year.

Ingredients

1 large potato, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes
200g tin of sweetcorn, drained
1 teaspoon green chilli paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon hot paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

½ teaspoon nigella seeds
100g mozzarella cheese, grated
2 tablespoons plain flour
8 tablespoons water
4–5 tortilla wraps, cut in half
oil, for deep-frying

Method

Boil the potatoes for 8–10 minutes until only just tender, then drain in a colander and set aside.

Place the sweetcorn in a bowl with the chilli paste, garlic paste, chilli powder, paprika, cumin, salt, black pepper, nigella seeds and mozzarella. Add the potatoes and mix everything together, mushing the mixture with the back of a spoon a little, but not completely, to add some texture to the mixture.

Make a paste by mixing the flour and water in a small bowl to a smooth consistency.

Take one of the tortilla halves and use a pastry brush to brush a little of the flour paste around the edges. Place 2 tablespoons of the filling on one half of the tortilla and fold the other half over the top to form a triangle, as shown on page 31. Gently press around the edges of the samosa to make sure it's sealed properly, then repeat with the remaining tortillas and filling.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the samosas in batches for 1 minute on each side until golden all over, then drain on kitchen paper. These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

These samosas can also be baked. Brush with a little oil and bake in a preheated oven at 180°C (gas mark 4) for 10–15 minutes.

Spicy Potato & Sweetcorn Tortilla Samosas

Chicken & Piccalilli Squares

MAKES
25

TIME
Prep 45 minutes
Cook 28 minutes

These square samosas are my favourite. Piccalilli is a relish with a spicy kick and a touch of sweetness, made with a mixture of vegetables. It tastes so good with the tender chicken, wrapped in crispy, crunchy parcels. My mother-in-law made these one Ramadan, and at the first bite I knew I had to make them myself. These are easier to make than the traditional triangular samosas. Serve with Red Pepper Chutney (see page 137) for dipping.

Ingredients

50g butter
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 onions, finely chopped
500g chicken breast, cut into 1cm cubes
1 tablespoon garlic paste
1 tablespoon green chilli paste
1 large potato, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes

5 tablespoons piccalilli
5 tablespoons chilli and garlic sauce
½ teaspoon salt
5g fresh coriander, finely chopped
2 tablespoons plain flour
8 tablespoons water
1 packet of spring roll wrappers
oil, for deep-frying

Method

Melt the butter in a saucepan on a low heat and sprinkle in the cumin seeds. When they start to sizzle, add the onions and fry for 5 minutes until soft and translucent.

Add the chicken, stir well, cover and cook on a medium heat for 25 minutes or until very little moisture is left. Add the garlic paste and chilli paste.

Meanwhile, boil the potatoes for 8–10 minutes until only just tender, then drain in a colander and set aside. Blitz the piccalilli in a food processor until smooth.

Add the potatoes, piccalilli, chilli and garlic sauce and salt to the chicken and mix everything together. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool completely, then stir in the chopped coriander.

Make a paste by mixing the flour and water in a small bowl to a smooth consistency.

Take one of the spring roll wrappers and cut into long strips about 5cm wide. Keep the wrappers you aren't using covered with a damp tea towel to stop them drying out. Working with 2 strips at a time, follow the diagram on page 30 and place one strip on a clean work surface with one of the short edges towards you and brush the bottom 5cm of the strip with a little flour paste. Create an `L' shape by placing one end of the second strip on top of the flour paste at a 90-degree angle and press together.

Spoon 1½ tablespoons of the filling on the square section where the strips overlap. Fold the vertical strip down over the filling, then brush the top section that covers the filling with flour paste. Fold the second strip up and over the filling and press down to seal. Turn the parcel over and repeat the process, brushing with paste and folding until you have a square samosa. Repeat to make more squares until you've used up all the filling.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the squares in batches for 3 minutes on each side until golden all over, then drain on kitchen paper. These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

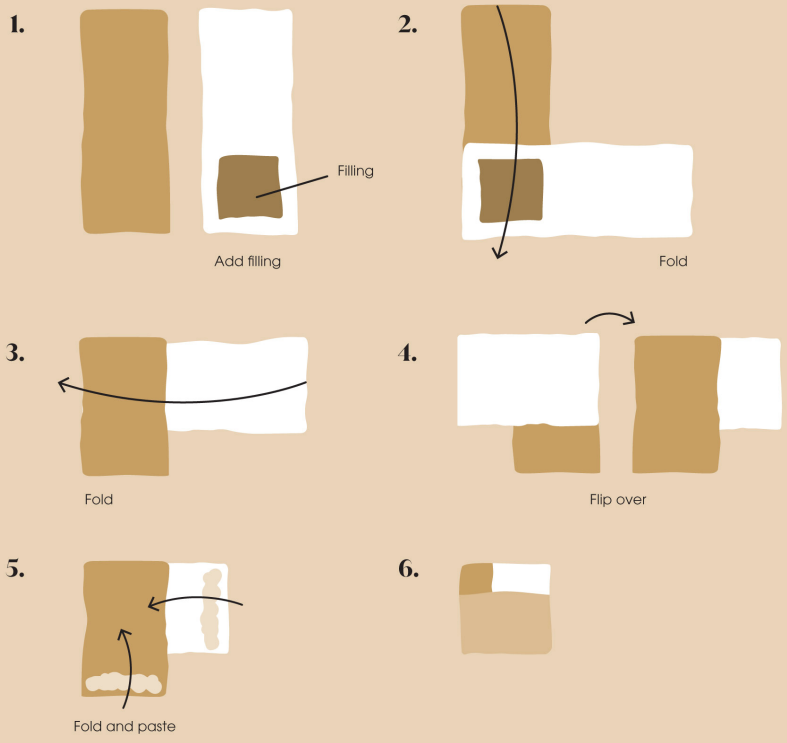
These chicken squares can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the uncooked squares on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and fry when required.

Chicken & Piccalilli Squares

How to fold a Samosa

The folding techniques for squares and samosas can seem tricky at first, but hopefully these drawings will help if you've not tried it before. Practice makes perfect!

Squares



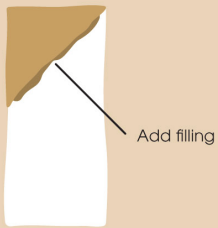
Samosas

1.

Fold

2.

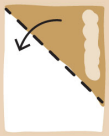
3.



4.

Fold and paste

5.

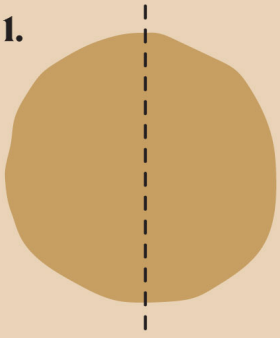


Fold and paste

6.

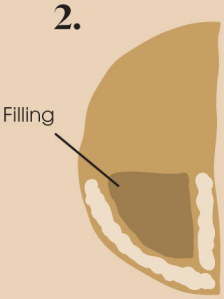
Tortilla Samosas

1.



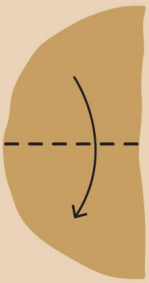
Cut

2.



Add filling and paste

3.



Fold

4.

Jalapeño & Chicken Samosas

MAKES
25–30

TIME
Prep 45 minutes
Cook 36 minutes

One of my personal favourite savoury snacks, and one we make every Ramadan. The filling is different to a traditional samosa, but I can assure you that from the first bite, you will be eagerly awaiting the next. Serve with Red Pepper Chutney (see page 137) or Pineapple Chutney (see page 136).

Ingredients

2 tablespoons oil, plus extra for deep-frying
1 onion, finely diced
500g chicken breast, cut into small pieces
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon chilli paste
½ red pepper, diced
½ green pepper, diced
4 tablespoons jalapeño sauce
125g Cheddar cheese, grated
200g soft cream cheese
10g fresh coriander, chopped
2 tablespoons spring onions, chopped
2 tablespoons plain flour
8 tablespoons water
25–30 samosa leaves
3–4 eggs, beaten
250g shop-bought golden breadcrumbs
salt

Method

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan on a low heat, add the onion and cook for 5–6 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the chicken, cover and cook for 25 minutes, until the liquid released from the chicken has evaporated. Add the ginger paste, garlic paste, black pepper, cumin, chilli paste, red and green peppers and jalapeño sauce, season with salt and cook for 5–6 minutes until the peppers have just softened. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.

When the filling mixture has cooled down, add the grated cheese, cream cheese, fresh coriander and spring onions and stir everything together.

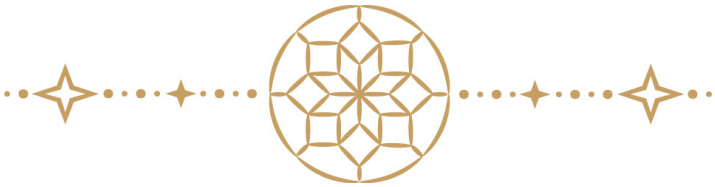
Make a paste by mixing the flour and water in a small bowl to a smooth consistency.

Lay a samosa leaf on a work surface with one short end facing you and fold according to the illustrations on page 31 to form a triangular pocket at the top. Fill the pocket with 1 teaspoon of filling, then use a pastry brush to brush some of the flour paste on the top of the filled triangle. Continue to wrap the samosa, brushing paste between the layers, to make a neat triangular parcel. Repeat with the remaining samosa leaves and filling.

Place the beaten egg in one bowl and the breadcrumbs in a second, shallow, bowl. Dip the samosas in the egg, then coat with breadcrumbs.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Drop a breadcrumb in the oil – if it sizzles, the oil is ready. Fry the samosas in batches for 2–3 minutes on each side until golden, then drain in a colander to remove excess oil. These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

These samosas can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the coated samosas on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and fry when required.



Chicken Croquettes

MAKES ABOUT 18

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 5 minutes

Chicken croquettes are absolutely amazing – creamy, minty and spicy, these chicken-nugget style snacks are dipped in breadcrumbs and deep fried until golden. When I was growing up, these were always my favourite, and it's the same with our kids! My mum would prepare these for Ramadan and make sure we had enough stocked in the freezer to last us throughout the month. These are super-easy and scrumptious.

Ingredients

500g chicken breast, cut into 4cm chunks
100ml double cream
2 teaspoons garlic paste
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon ground cumin
6–7 fresh chillies
30g fresh mint leaves

30g fresh coriander
200g shop-bought golden breadcrumbs
oil, for deep-frying

Method

Place the chicken with the cream, garlic paste, salt, pepper, cumin, chillies, mint and coriander together in a food processor and blitz until very finely chopped. Shape into croquettes around 5cm in length and then leave on a plate, covered, to marinate in the fridge for 2 hours or overnight if possible.

Place the breadcrumbs in a shallow bowl and turn the chunks of chicken in the crumbs to coat.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the chicken pieces in batches for 4–5 minutes until golden all over, turning occasionally, then drain on kitchen paper.

These chicken sticks can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Cover the chicken pieces in breadcrumbs and arrange on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and fry when required.

Chicken Croquettes

Keema Pies

MAKES
15

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 25 minutes

Golden, flaky puff pastry outside and delicious spicy succulent lamb inside. My children absolutely love pies and they are very popular in most households during Ramadan. I prepare them in batches a month ahead of time and keep them in the freezer ready for Ramadan. I make these outside of Ramadan too because we love them that much – no matter how many I make, it's never enough and the moment they're baked, they get snapped up. Serve with chutney, such as the Red Pepper Chutney on page 137.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 onion, diced
400g lamb mince
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon green chilli paste

1 teaspoon peri-peri seasoning
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon garam masala
2 tablespoons diced red pepper
2 tablespoons diced green pepper
30g frozen petit pois
5g fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped
2 spring onions, finely chopped
2 tablespoons plain flour, plus extra for dusting
8 tablespoons water
2 x 320g packets of ready-rolled puff pastry
1 egg, beaten
sesame seeds, for sprinkling

Method

Heat the oil in a wok on a low heat and sprinkle in the cumin seeds. When they start to sizzle, add the onions and fry for 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the lamb mince and cook on a medium heat for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the meat is browned and only a little moisture remains.

Add the ginger paste, garlic paste, chilli paste, peri-peri, cumin, ground coriander, black pepper, salt, garam masala, red and green peppers and peas. Stir

and cook for about 1 minute, then remove from the heat and set aside to cool. Stir in the chopped coriander and spring onions.

Make a paste by mixing the flour and water in a small bowl to a smooth consistency. Preheat the oven to 190°C (gas mark 5) and line a baking sheet with baking paper.

Unroll the puff pastry on a floured surface and cut out 15 squares, about 10cm across. Brush the edges of the squares with the flour paste and place a heaped tablespoon of the mince mixture in the middle of each. Fold the pastry squares into triangles or rectangles – whichever shape you prefer – enclosing the filling and pressing the edges together gently to seal the parcels. Cut 2 small slits in the tops of the parcels to allow hot air to escape while they are baking.

Place the parcels on the prepared baking sheet, brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Cook in the oven for 25 minutes until golden brown. Delish! These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

These keema pies can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the uncooked pies on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and bake when required.

Dynamite Prawns

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 4 minutes

Prawns are always a hit with my family and the Dynamite variety are no exception. Saucy, spicy and bite-sized, these are super-addictive and will keep you going until the main meal arrives.

Ingredients

300g raw peeled and deveined king prawns
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon ground white pepper
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons cornflour
200g plain flour
1 teaspoon paprika
salt
oil, for deep-frying

SPICY MAYO SAUCE

130g mayonnaise
65g sriracha sauce
50g sweet chilli sauce
½ teaspoon chilli powder

TO SERVE
green salad
finely chopped spring onion
lemon wedges

Method

For the sauce, place all the ingredients in a bowl, stir to combine and set aside.

Place the prawns in another bowl with the soy sauce, garlic powder, white pepper and egg and season with salt. Toss well to coat the prawns.

Place the cornflour, plain flour and paprika on a plate and stir together. Coat the prawns thoroughly in the flour one at a time and place them on a plate ready for deep-frying.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the prawns in batches for 3–4 minutes, flipping them over halfway through so they're evenly crisp and golden. Remove from the oil and drain on kitchen paper. Make sure not to overcook the prawns otherwise they will become chewy.

Place the crispy prawns in a bowl and add as much of the sauce as you like, completely coating them if you want. If you have remaining sauce, you can use it for dipping. Serve the prawns on a bed of green salad sprinkled with spring onions, with lemon wedges for squeezing.

Dynamite Prawns

Lamb & Mint Buns

MAKES
14

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Rising 1 hour
Cook 25 minutes

These soft and fluffy golden buns are stuffed with spiced, minty minced lamb. They are so filling and perfect for iftar, when breaking your fast. Great for pack lunches and days out too!

Ingredients

500g plain flour
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
7g dried yeast
2 tablespoons milk powder
100ml milk
180ml water
30g butter
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon double cream
sesame seeds, for sprinkling

FILLING
500g lamb mince

½ teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon garam masala
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons finely chopped spring onion
5g fresh coriander, finely chopped
5g fresh mint leaves, finely chopped

Method

Place the flour, salt, sugar, yeast and milk powder in a large bowl. Place the milk, water and butter in a small saucepan on a low heat until just warm, then gradually add as much of the mixture as required to the flour to make a soft dough.

With lightly oiled hands, knead the dough until smooth, then form into a ball, return to the bowl and cover with a cloth. Leave to rise for about 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

For the filling, place the lamb mince in a saucepan on a medium heat with the cumin seeds, black pepper, ginger paste and garlic paste. Cook for about 10

minutes, stirring occasionally, then cover and continue cooking until only a little moisture remains. Add the oil, ground cumin, ground coriander, chilli powder, garam masala, salt, spring onion, fresh coriander and mint.

Knock back the dough and knead lightly again, then divide into 14 pieces and roll into balls about 8cm across. Make an indent in the middle of each ball, spoon in about 1 tablespoon of the filling, then carefully bring the dough back over the filling to enclose it. Roll each into a ball again, making sure the filling doesn't come out. Arrange on a baking sheet lined with baking paper and allow to rise for 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4).

Whisk the beaten egg and cream together in a small bowl and use a pastry brush to brush the mixture over the top of each bun. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Cook in the oven for 25 minutes or until golden brown. These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

You can also make these delicious buns with beef or chicken mince.

These buns can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the uncooked buns on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and bake when required.

Lamb & Mint Buns

Hariyali Chicken

SERVES
3

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Marinating 2–3 hrs
Cook 25 minutes

Also known as Hariyali Tikka or Green Chicken Tikka, this North Indian appetizer is easy to make yet delicious. The chicken pieces are marinated in a vibrant paste prepared with fresh herbs and green chillies – it's the colour of this paste that gives the dish its name.

Ingredients

10g fresh mint leaves
10g fresh coriander
20g fresh ginger, peeled
2 garlic cloves
4–5 fresh green chillies
400g boneless chicken thighs or breast, cut into 2–3cm chunks
3 tablespoons oil, plus extra for greasing
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon mango powder
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

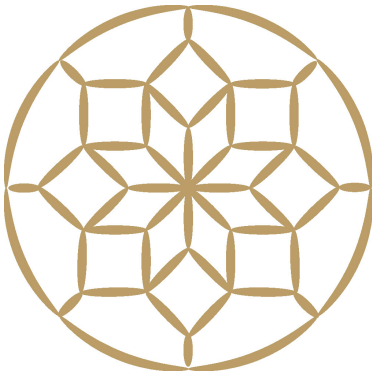
1 teaspoon salt
50g plain yogurt
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Method

Place the mint leaves, fresh coriander, ginger, garlic and green chillies in a food processor and blend until smooth. Transfer to a bowl with all the remaining ingredients – at this point, your kitchen will be smelling absolutely fresh, lemony and minty. Mix well to coat each piece of chicken and place in the fridge to marinate for 2–3 hours or, better, overnight.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4), line a baking tray with foil and grease it lightly. Soak some bamboo skewers in water for 30 minutes – this way they do not burn during cooking. Thread the marinated chicken pieces on the skewers and place on the prepared baking tray. Cook in the oven for 25 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through.

Serve salad and the Mint & Coriander Yogurt Chutney on page 137 with these skewers.



Hariyali Chicken

Crispy Pakoras

MAKES ABOUT 15

TIME
Prep 25 minutes
Cook 3 minutes

The humble pakora – these crispy, deep-fried snacks really don't need an introduction. Basic pakoras are made with sliced onions, fresh fenugreek leaves, chickpea flour and Indian spices, but you can add other vegetables such as grated carrots and potatoes, or even chicken. My dad absolutely loves them (these and a bowl of warm custard), so I'm always sure to keep some ready when he visits. Serve them fresh and hot – you will soon see them disappearing one by one from the plate – accompanied by my Tomato & Coriander Chutney (see page 137).

Ingredients

1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large red onion, finely chopped
125g spinach, finely chopped
125g fresh fenugreek leaves, chopped (stems removed)
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon chilli powder

1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon carom seeds (ajwain)
2 teaspoons garlic paste
2 teaspoons green chilli paste
1 tablespoon dried fenugreek leaves
1 heaped tablespoon rice flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
200g chickpea flour
200g tin of sweetcorn
about 200ml water
salt
oil, for deep-frying

Method

Place the onions in a large bowl with the chopped spinach and fresh fenugreek. Add the turmeric, chilli powder, ground coriander, cumin, carom seeds, garlic paste, chilli paste, dried fenugreek, rice flour, baking powder and chickpea flour. Season with salt.

Add the sweetcorn and the liquid from the tin with just enough water to hold the mixture together – the consistency shouldn't be too thick or too thin.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Drop a little bit of the mixture into the oil – if it sizzles, the oil is ready. Drop heaped tablespoons of the mixture into the oil in

batches and cook for 2–3 minutes until golden and crispy all over, turning occasionally, then drain on kitchen paper. These pakoras are best eaten hot and fresh on the day they are cooked.

Crispy Pakoras

Salmon Pakoras

MAKES ABOUT 10

TIME
Prep 10 minutes
Cook 4 minutes

This delicious deep-fried starter is so addictive. The fish is lightly spiced with aromatic spices and herbs, and the seasoned batter makes it so crispy, flavourful and tasty.

Ingredients

250g boneless, skinless salmon, cut into chunks
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
salt
oil, for deep-frying

BATTER
3 tablespoons chickpea flour
1 tablespoon cornflour
½ teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon nigella seeds

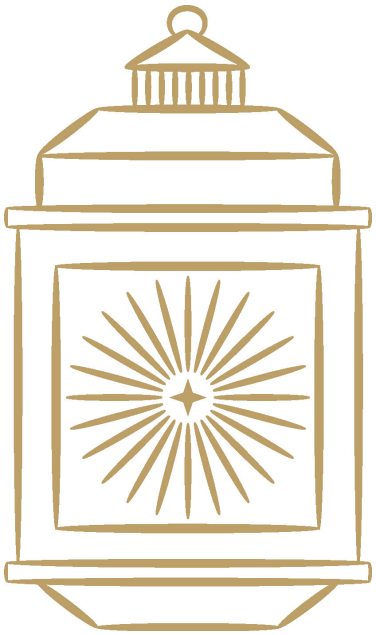
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
120ml water

Method

Place the salmon in a bowl with the garlic, paprika, black pepper, lemon juice and dill and season with salt. Leave to marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes.

For the batter, place the chickpea flour in a bowl with the cornflour, chilli powder, nigella seeds, salt and black pepper. Add the water bit by bit, stirring all the time to make a smooth batter – it should be thick enough to coat the salmon pieces.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Drop a little bit of the batter into the oil – if it sizzles, the oil is ready. Dip the salmon pieces in the batter, then carefully drop into the oil in batches and cook for about 2 minutes on each side until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper.



Chinese-style Spring Rolls

MAKES
20

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 10 minutes

These flaky, crispy spring rolls are filled with a mixture of crunchy vegetables and intriguing Chinese-inspired flavours. Spring rolls are popular appetizers. They are so easy to make with readily available spring roll wrappers and even easier to eat – one will definitely not be enough. If you like to dip, serve them with Red Pepper Chutney (see page 137) or sweet chilli sauce.

Ingredients

1 nest of dried rice noodles
1 tablespoon oil, plus extra for deep-frying
1 onion, finely sliced
100g white cabbage, shredded
1 carrot, peeled and julienned
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
3 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
2 tablespoons diced red pepper

2 tablespoons diced green pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander
1 spring onion, chopped
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
2 tablespoons plain flour
8 tablespoons water
20 spring roll wrappers, about 15cm square
salt

Method

Soak the noodles in cold water according to packet instructions until soft, then drain in a colander.

Heat the oil in a wok on a high heat and add the onion, cabbage and carrots. Cover the wok and cook for 2–4 minutes until the cabbage has wilted slightly. Add the soy sauce, sweet chilli sauce and chilli flakes and season with salt.

Add the drained noodles, peppers, fresh coriander, spring onion and sesame seeds, tossing well to ensure everything is evenly coated, and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Leave the mixture to cool completely.

Make a paste by mixing the flour and water in a small bowl to a smooth consistency.

Place one of the spring roll wrappers on a flat surface with a corner facing towards you. Arrange 2 tablespoons of the filling in a line across the wrapper

about 5cm up from the corner that is closest to you. Roll the bottom corner over the filling, then fold in both sides of the wrapper. Continue rolling away from you until you have a neat cigar shape. Use a pastry brush to brush a little of the flour paste under the corner of the wrapper to seal it.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the spring rolls in batches for 3 minutes on each side until golden, then drain on kitchen paper. These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

These spring rolls can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the uncooked rolls on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and fry when required.

Veggie Pizza Pinwheels

MAKES
12

TIME
Prep 35 minutes
Cook 15 minutes

Puff pastry pinwheels are one of the easiest treats to make – using store-bought puff pastry, of course. Lightly spiced and filled with red onions, mixed peppers, olives and cheese, these are extremely addictive. Serve with Tomato & Coriander Chutney (see page 137).

Ingredients

2 tablespoons black olives, chopped
2 tablespoons chopped red pepper
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper
2 tablespoons tinned sweetcorn kernels, drained
1 small red onion, diced
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
100g medium Cheddar cheese, grated
375g ready-rolled puff pastry

6 tablespoons ready-made smooth tomato pasta sauce
1 egg, beaten
salt

Method

Place the olives in a bowl with the red and green peppers, sweetcorn, red onion, mixed herbs, chilli flakes, black pepper and grated cheese and season with salt. Toss everything together.

Unroll the puff pastry and spread a layer of pasta sauce over it, leaving a 1cm border around the edges. Scatter the veggie mix evenly on top. Roll up the pastry lengthways to make a tight roll and chill in the fridge for 10 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4) and line a baking tray with baking paper.

Use a sharp knife to cut the roll into 12 equal slices and arrange them on the prepared baking tray. Brush each pinwheel lightly with beaten egg and cook in the oven for 12–15 minutes until puffed and golden. These are best eaten fresh from the oven.

You can also use ready-rolled pizza dough – it will taste just as good!

These pinwheels can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the uncooked pinwheels on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and bake when required.

Veggie Pizza Pinwheels

Chicken Bread Rolls

MAKES
12

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 6 minutes

These are so awesome, you're going to love them and I'm sure you'll agree they are super-easy to make and so addictive. The cream cheese melts inside, making the filling lovely and saucy. These are very popular in Indian homes, served as a snack, at picnics or when entertaining guests. Serve with Red Pepper Chutney (see page 137).

Ingredients

50g butter
1 onion, finely diced
300g chicken breast, cut into 1cm cubes
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon green chilli paste
80g tinned sweetcorn kernels, drained
½ red pepper, finely diced
½ green pepper, finely diced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

300g soft cream cheese
5g fresh coriander, finely chopped
12 slices of white bread
2 tablespoons plain flour
8 tablespoons water
2 eggs, beaten
175g shop-bought golden breadcrumbs
salt
oil, for deep-frying

Method

Heat the butter in a large frying pan over a low-medium heat, add the onion and fry for 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the chicken, ginger paste, garlic paste and chilli paste and cook for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the liquid from the chicken has nearly evaporated and only a small amount of moisture is left.

Add the sweetcorn, red and green peppers, cumin and black pepper and season with salt. Give the mixture a good stir, remove from the heat and set aside to cool completely. Once cool, stir in the soft cream cheese and fresh coriander.

Warm the slices of bread in batches in the microwave for 40 seconds, then cut off and discard the crusts. Use a rolling pin to roll out the slices to about 5mm thick. Make a paste by mixing the flour and water in a small

bowl to a smooth consistency. Use a pastry brush to brush the edges of the bread slices with the flour paste.

To assemble, place 2 tablespoons of the filling along one short end of a slice of bread and roll tightly into a cigar shape. Pinch the ends of the roll to seal and repeat with the remaining bread and filling. Place the beaten egg in one bowl and the breadcrumbs in a second, shallow, bowl. Dip the rolls in the egg, then coat with breadcrumbs.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the rolls in batches for 3 minutes on each side until golden, then drain on kitchen paper. These are best eaten fresh on the day they are cooked.

These bread rolls can be made in large batches and kept in the freezer. Arrange the coated rolls on a baking sheet, then freeze until hard. Store in plastic bags in small quantities, then defrost and fry when required.

Chicken Bread Rolls

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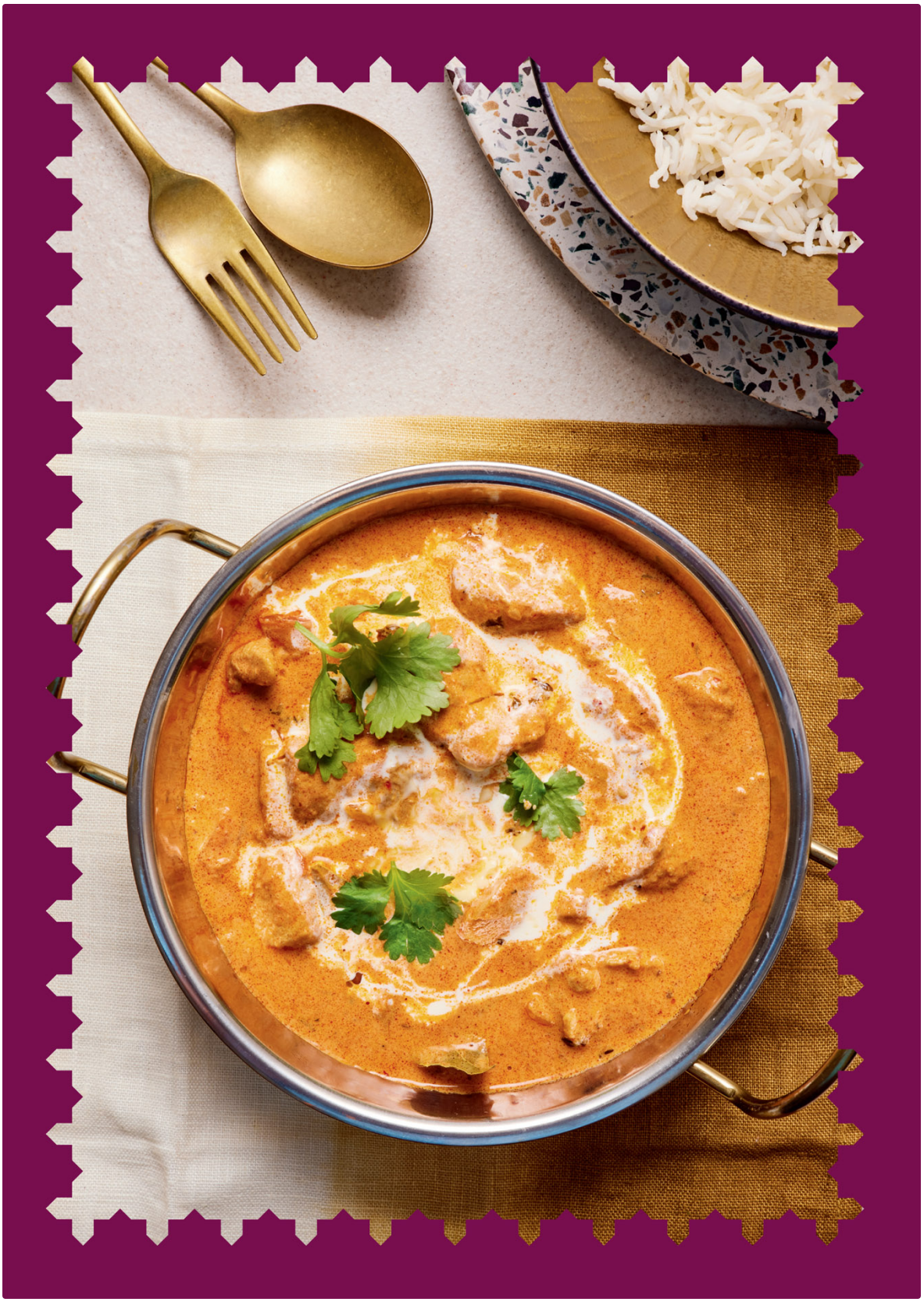

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Recipe List

Lamb Haleem
Khuri & Khitchri
Spinach, Potatoes & Peas
Sizzling Lamb Steaks
Bombay Potatoes
Creamy Mixed Vegetables
Prawn Jalfrezi
Butter Chicken
Kidney Bean Curry
Chicken, Mogo & Corn Casserole
Achari Kheema
Masala Roast Chicken & Herby Potatoes

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Lamb Haleem

SERVES
6

TIME
Prep 40 mins plus overnight soaking
Cook 2 hrs 15 mins
(If you have a pressure cooker, this will cut your cooking time in half)

Perfect to enjoy at the end of a fasting day, haleem is a comforting and hearty dish with succulent melt-in-the-mouth lamb. The finished dish is somewhere between a stew and a soup. Serve with Naan (see pages 130-1) or enjoy just on its own.

Ingredients

150g broth mix
1kg diced lamb shoulder or leg
about 1.2 litres water
4 tablespoons basmati rice
100ml oil
1 tablespoon ghee
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 cinnamon sticks
5–6 black peppercorns
5–6 cloves
5–6 cardamom pods

2 bay leaves
2 large onions, finely chopped
1 fresh tomato, diced
1 tablespoon green chilli paste
1½ tablespoons ginger paste
1½ tablespoons garlic paste
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
10g fresh coriander
10g fresh mint leaves
¼ teaspoon garam masala
salt

GARNISH
finely chopped fresh coriander
finely chopped fresh mint
20g fresh ginger, peeled and julienned
sliced fresh red chilli
3 tablespoons shop-bought fried onions
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Method

Place the broth mix in a large bowl, cover with cold water and leave to soak overnight.

Heat a large wide saucepan on a low heat. Place the lamb in the saucepan and boil off the liquid that is released from the meat, stirring occasionally to make

sure the meat doesn't burn. This will take 20–25 minutes. Add the water, rice and broth mix and simmer on a low heat for 1 hour, stirring occasionally, until the pulses are soft and the mixture is nice and thick.

Pour the oil into another large pan on a low-medium heat, add the ghee, cumin seeds, cinnamon sticks, peppercorns, cloves, cardamom pods, bay leaves and the onions and fry for 20 minutes until golden. Add the tomato, green chilli paste, ginger and garlic paste, cumin, ground coriander, turmeric and salt and stir together on a low heat until the spices are well combined.

Add the onion and tomato mixture to the meat saucepan and mix everything together. Blitz together the coriander and mint leaves in a food processor or chop them very finely and add to the haleem with the garam masala to enhance the flavour. Season with salt.

Serve in bowls, garnished with chopped coriander and mint, fresh ginger, chillies and fried onions. Squeeze over some lemon juice to taste.

If the haleem is too thick, you can thin it down by adding some extra water.

Lamb Haleem

Khuri & Khitchri

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 55 minutes

This classic dish of spicy yogurt curry and yellow rice goes perfectly with Bombay Potatoes (see page 62) or Spinach, Potatoes & Peas (see page 59). Don't forget the poppadoms on the side.

Ingredients

KHITCHRI

1 tablespoon oil
1 tablespoon ghee, plus extra for finishing
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 onion, finely sliced
1 cinnamon stick
3–4 black peppercorns
3–4 cloves
3–4 cardamom pods
2–3 star anise
1 bay leaf
600ml water
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon salt

125g toor dhal (split pigeon peas)
250g basmati rice

KHURI

1 tablespoon ghee
1 tablespoon oil
1 small onion, diced
1 small fresh tomato, diced
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground coriander
¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
2 teaspoons green chilli paste
500g plain yogurt
125ml single cream
125ml full-fat milk
50ml water
1 tablespoon chickpea flour

GARNISH

1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 tablespoon ghee
6–7 curry leaves
10g fresh coriander, finely chopped

Method

For the khitchri, heat a large saucepan on a low-medium heat and add the oil, ghee, cumin seeds,

sliced onion, cinnamon stick, peppercorns, cloves, cardamom pods, star anise and bay leaf. Fry gently for 10 minutes until lightly golden. Add the water, turmeric and salt and bring to the boil.

Wash the toor dhal and rice in a sieve under cold running water until the water runs clear. Once the water in the saucepan starts to bubble, add the toor dhal and rice, stir and partially cover the pan with a lid (not completely or the water may boil over). Cook on a medium heat for 15 minutes until the water has been absorbed, then give it a stir once without disturbing the rice too much. Cover fully with the lid and cook for another 15 minutes on a low heat – with the build up of steam, the rice will fully cook and fluff up. Finish with a little ghee on top for that extra buttery flavour.

For the khuri, heat a saucepan over a medium heat and add the ghee, oil, onion, tomato, cumin, ground coriander, turmeric, ginger paste, garlic paste and chilli paste, season with salt and cook for about 3–4 minutes until the tomato and onion have softened.

Whisk the yogurt together with the cream, milk, water and chickpea flour. Pour into the masala mixture and whisk together on a low heat for about 1 minute until hot, making sure not to curdle the khuri. If you want a thinner consistency, add a little more water.

For the garnish, heat a small frying pan on a medium heat and dry-fry the cumin seeds for 1 minute until they

turn dark brown in colour. Add the ghee and it will start to sizzle. Throw in the curry leaves and fresh coriander and stir together for about 30 seconds on a low heat. Pour the mixture on top of the khuri.

Plate up a portion of khitchri, then pour over as much khuri as you like.

Khuri & Khitchri

Spinach, Potatoes & Peas

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 30 minutes

I absolutely love fresh spinach, so tender and sweet. You really have to try this – it's very easy to make and on your table in less than 30 minutes. This dish is the perfect accompaniment to Khuri & Khitchri (see pages 56-7), but it's also delicious served simply with Roti (see pages 126-7).

Ingredients

100g frozen peas
2 tablespoons oil
1 onion, finely sliced
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon green chilli paste
1 potato, cubed
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 fresh tomato, diced
500g spinach, finely chopped

salt

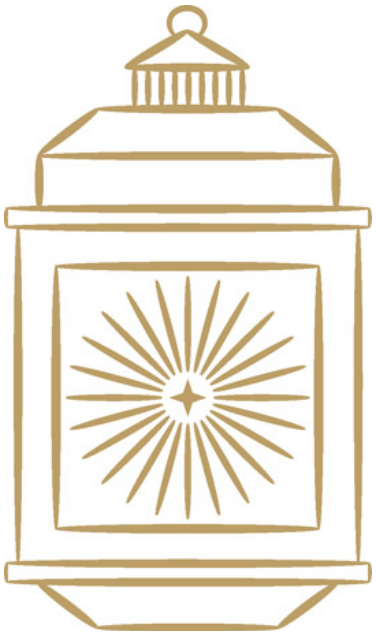
Method

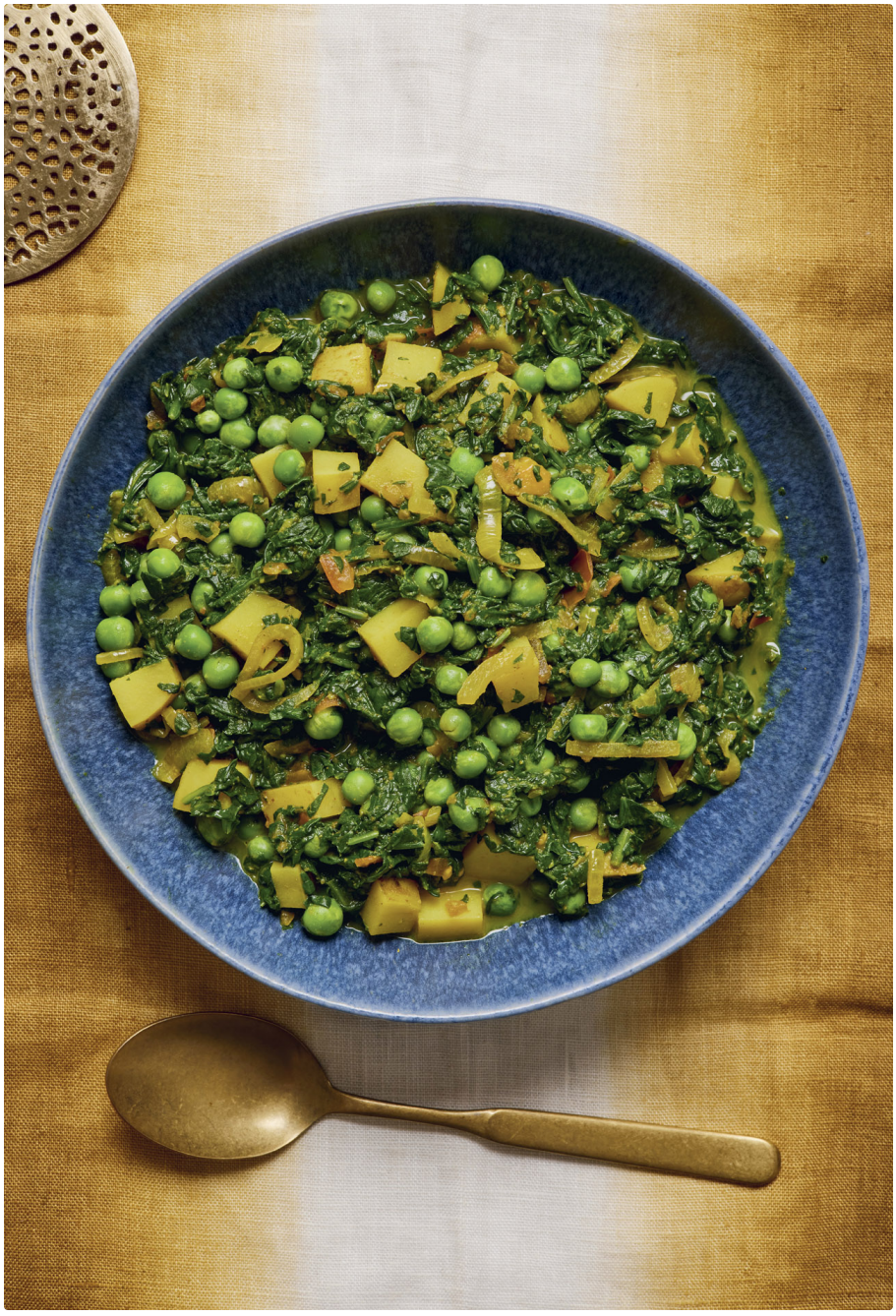
Cook the frozen peas in a saucepan of boiling water for 3–4 minutes, then drain in a colander.

Heat a medium saucepan on a low heat, add the oil and onion and cook for about 2 minutes until softened. Add the ginger paste, garlic paste and chilli paste and cook, stirring, for another minute.

Add the potato, stir well, cover and cook for 10 minutes or until the potato has softened. (If the saucepan is looking a bit dry, add a splash of water to the potato to help it cook. Sometimes the steam created is enough, but if needed, add some additional water.)

Once the potato is cooked, add the cumin, coriander, turmeric, tomato, spinach and peas and season with salt. Stir everything together, cover and cook on a medium heat for 8–10 minutes until the tomatoes have softened and the spinach has wilted.





Spinach, Potatoes & Peas

Sizzling Lamb Steaks

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Marinating 2–3 hrs
Cook 16 minutes

My sizzling lamb steaks are perfect for the end of a day of fasting. Cooked in a frying pan, they are loaded with flavours, including herbs and Worcestershire sauce, and take literally minutes to cook. Great served with salad and chips.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons chilli sauce
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 tablespoons lemon juice
4 lean lamb steaks
2 tablespoons oil
salt

Method

Mix the olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, chilli sauce, chilli powder, black pepper, oregano and lemon juice in a bowl. Add the lamb steaks, mix well to make sure they are completely coated and marinate in the fridge for 2–3 hours.

Heat a frying pan or griddle pan on a medium heat, add the oil and cook the steaks for 2–3 minutes on each side for medium-rare, or 6–8 minutes on each side for medium to well done. Season with salt and serve.

Sizzling Lamb Steaks

Bombay Potatoes

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 25 minutes

This very traditional, classic and versatile side dish can be enjoyed with so many main meals, although it's normally served alongside Khuri & Khitchri (see pages 56-7). My family also loves this on its own with Roti (see pages 126-7) or as a Sunday morning brunch with eggs. It's so simple to make with just a handful of ingredients, yet ever so comforting, warming and satisfying.

Ingredients

2 large potatoes, peeled and cut into 4mm slices
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
2 tablespoons oil
salt
chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

Method

Place the potato slices in a large bowl with the turmeric, cumin, ground coriander, chilli powder, ginger paste and garlic paste. Season with salt and mix everything together with a spoon or your hands to coat the potato slices with the spices.

Heat the oil in a frying pan on a low-medium heat and add the potatoes. Stir, cover and cook for 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are cooked through, stirring occasionally so they don't stick to the pan. Garnish with fresh coriander.

TIP Any leftover potatoes can make a quick lunch. Place some potato slices in the middle of a roti, add some ketchup and roll up. It tastes so good!

Creamy Mixed Vegetables

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 10 minutes

This simple dish is so easy to prepare and so delicious – sure to pamper your palate. Serve with Sizzling Lamb Steaks (see page 61), Masala Roast Chicken (see page 72) or just on its own.

Ingredients

1 large potato, peeled and cut into 2–3cm chunks
1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into 2–3cm chunks
1 large carrot, peeled and cut into 2–3cm chunks
1 corn on the cob, cut into 3 pieces
50g frozen peas
40g butter
1 teaspoon garlic paste
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 tablespoon chilli flakes
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
½ teaspoon salt
100ml single or double cream

Method

Place the potato, sweet potato, carrot, corn and peas in a steamer and cook for 20 minutes or until just tender with a slight bite to them. Do not overcook or they will become mushy. Alternatively, cook the vegetables in a saucepan of boiling water if you prefer.

Melt the butter in a saucepan on a low heat and add the garlic paste, sugar, black pepper, chilli flakes, mixed herbs, salt and cream. Gently simmer the sauce for 8–10 minutes until nice and creamy. Add the vegetables to the sauce and stir together.

Other vegetables also work well in this dish – try cauliflower, spring beans and mixed peppers too!

Prawn Jalfrezi

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 16 minutes

Typically made with chilli, tomatoes and onions among other ingredients, a jalfrezi is considered to be a hot and spicy thick sauce rather than a full-on curry. I guess you could call it an Indian stir-fry and it's so easy to prepare and cook. Jalfrezi can be made with only vegetables, or with chicken too, but it's ever so quick with prawns. Serve with Naan (see pages 130-1), Roti (see pages 126-7) or Basmati Rice (see page 132).

Ingredients

3 tablespoons oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
50g tinned chopped tomatoes
½ red pepper, cut into chunks
½ green pepper, cut into chunks
1 large red onion, cut into 2–3cm chunks
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chilli flakes

1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground cumin
500g raw peeled king prawns
½ teaspoon salt
50ml water
1 teaspoon lemon juice

GARNISH
1 spring onion, finely chopped
sliced red chilli

Method

Heat a wok on a low heat, add the oil and chopped onion and sauté for about 3 minutes until translucent. Blitz the tomatoes in a food processor until smooth, then add to the wok with the red and green peppers and red onion. Add the garlic paste, chilli flakes, chilli powder, turmeric and cumin and cook the spices for about a minute.

Stir in the prawns, salt, water and lemon juice, cover and cook for 10–12 minutes until cooked through. Garnish with spring onion, coriander and red chilli before serving.

You can add extra vegetables to this tasty jalfrezi – stir in some chopped spinach or sweet potato chunks if you'd like to give it a veggie boost.

Prawn Jalfrezi

Butter Chicken

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 25 minutes

A royal dish if ever there was one, Butter Chicken is known for its luxuriously rich texture and for me, the thicker and creamier the better. It's a flavourful, aromatic curry with a butter and tomato base – wonderfully creamy and tastes out of this world. My children absolutely love this beautiful dish. I make this often and serve it with Basmati Rice (see page 132). My husband loves Butter Chicken too and makes it using this recipe – I've got to say it's pretty good! Forget going out to dinner – make this and have a night in. You can thank me later!

Ingredients

4–5 tablespoons oil
2 bay leaves
1 onion, finely chopped
500g chicken breast, cut into chunks
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chilli powder

1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 tablespoon Kashmiri chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 tablespoon butter chicken masala or tandoori masala
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon dried fenugreek leaves
1 fresh tomato, chopped
250g tomato passata
100–150ml water
125ml milk
150ml single or double cream
30g butter
2 tablespoons lemon juice
chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

Method

Heat the oil in a large saucepan on a low heat, add the bay leaves and onion and cook for 5 minutes until golden brown. Add the chicken, ginger paste and garlic paste and cook for 25 minutes until only a little moisture is left from the chicken.

Add the chilli powder, chilli flakes, Kashmiri chilli powder, ground coriander, cumin, turmeric, butter chicken masala or tandoori masala, salt, pepper and dried

fenugreek and stir well. Add the fresh tomato and passata, cook for 1 minute, then pour in the water, milk and cream and stir well. Simmer for 8–10 minutes until the sauce has thickened.

Add the butter, letting it melt through the sauce, then add the lemon juice and serve sprinkled with chopped coriander.

Butter Chicken

Kidney Bean Curry

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 50 minutes

A hearty, aromatic, protein-rich curry with fragrant spices, onions and tomatoes, and one of my mother-in-law's specialities (hers is always so good). This is a staple dish in our home and I'm sure it will become one of yours too! Serve with Basmati Rice (see page 132) or Roti (see pages 126-7).

Ingredients

5 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 onions, finely chopped
6–7 curry leaves
400g tin of chopped tomatoes
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon green chilli paste

2 x 400g tins of kidney beans, drained
800ml water
salt

GARNISH
chopped fresh coriander
pinch of garam masala

Method

Heat a large wide saucepan on a low-medium heat and add the oil and cumin seeds. When they start to sizzle, add the onions and curry leaves and fry until the onions are golden brown.

Blitz the tinned tomatoes in a food processor until smooth, then add to the saucepan with the turmeric, chilli powder, ground coriander, cumin, garlic paste, ginger paste and chilli paste. Season with salt, stir, cover and cook the masala on a medium heat for 8–10 minutes until reduced. You want to really cook the spices nicely and cook off the rawness of the ginger and garlic.

Add the kidney beans and water and simmer for 25 minutes. While the curry is simmering, use the back of a spoon to crush some of the kidney beans – not all of them – into the sauce. This will thicken the curry and make it creamier. Serve garnished with fresh coriander and a sprinkle of garam masala on top.

Chicken, Mogo & Corn Casserole

SERVES
6–7

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 2 hours

My grandmother introduced me to this tasty dish and her mother showed her how to make it, a dish she used to make in Malawi. I would describe it as more of a stew than a curry. When you start making this recipe it's very similar to making a chicken curry, but the sweet and nutty mogo and the creamy coconut add a whole new level of deliciousness.

Ingredients

500g frozen mogo (cassava)
2 corn on the cob, cut into 3cm pieces
3 tablespoons oil
1 onion, finely sliced
300g chicken thighs on the bone
300g chicken breast, cut into chunks

1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ginger paste
1 tablespoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon green chilli paste
100g tinned chopped tomatoes
1 fresh tomato, finely chopped
200g creamed coconut, chopped
500ml water
salt
chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

WHOLE SPICES
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 cinnamon sticks
3 cardamom pods
5–6 black peppercorns
5–6 cloves

Method

Place the mogo in a steamer and cook for 25 minutes or until just tender with a slight bite to it, adding the sweetcorn after 5 minutes. Do not overcook or they will become mushy. Alternatively, cook the vegetables in a saucepan of boiling water if you prefer. Cut the mogo into 3cm chunks and set aside.

Heat a large wide saucepan on a low-medium heat and add the oil and the whole spices. When they start to sizzle, add the onion and fry for 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Add the chicken, turmeric, chilli powder, chilli flakes, cumin, ground coriander, ginger paste, garlic paste and chilli paste. Season with salt, stir and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until no moisture is left.

Blitz the tinned tomatoes with the fresh tomato in a food processor until smooth, add to the chicken and cook for 10–12 minutes. Add the mogo, sweetcorn and creamed coconut and pour in the water. Stir well and simmer for 15 minutes until the casserole thickens. Serve into bowls, garnish with fresh coriander and enjoy!

Achari Kheema

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 1 hr 5 mins

I absolutely love mince, whether it's chicken or lamb. Mince is so versatile, great for kebabs, rice dishes and savouries too. Mince cooks very quickly, so when you don't have much time on your hands, try this delicious, spicy and saucy dish. Your family will enjoy it for sure. Serve with Naan (see pages 130-1) or Roti (see pages 126-7).

Ingredients

4 tablespoons oil
1–2 bay leaves
1–2 cinnamon sticks
1 onion, diced
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
500g lamb mince
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground turmeric

1 teaspoon mango powder
1 teaspoon dried fenugreek leaves
30g fresh fenugreek, finely chopped
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 fresh tomatoes, finely chopped
2 tablespoons tomato purée
2 tablespoons plain yogurt
80ml water
2 jalapeño chillies, halved
½ teaspoon nigella seeds
salt
finely chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

WHOLE SPICES
3–4 dried chillies
2 teaspoons coriander seeds
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
1 teaspoon nigella seeds
3–4 cloves
5–6 black peppercorns
½ teaspoon cardamom seeds

Method

Heat a frying pan on a medium heat and dry-fry the whole spices for 8 minutes, stirring, until fragrant. Tip into a food processor, grind to a powder and set aside.

Heat a medium saucepan on a low heat and add the oil, bay leaves and cinnamon sticks. Add the onion and

fry for 4–5 minutes or until golden brown. Add the spices you have ground, the ginger paste and garlic paste and cook for 30 seconds. Add the lamb mince, stir well, cover and cook until the mince has changed colour and the liquid has evaporated, about 25–30 minutes.

Add the chilli powder, turmeric, mango powder, dried fenugreek, fresh fenugreek, lemon juice, tomatoes, tomato purée, yogurt, water and jalapeños. Season with salt, stir everything together and simmer on a low heat for 15–20 minutes until the tomatoes have softened and broken down. Sprinkle over the nigella seeds and serve garnished with fresh coriander.

Achari Kheema

Masala Roast Chicken & Herby Potatoes

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 40 minutes
Marinating 1–2 hrs
Cook 1 hr 10 mins

Indian-spiced roast chicken is juicy, delicious and perfect for family dinners. You can roast, grill or pan-fry the chicken as you prefer. Adjust the amount of chilli powder to your liking.

Ingredients

4 chicken breasts, thighs or drumsticks
125ml oil, plus extra for drizzling
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon hot paprika
1 tablespoon peri-peri seasoning
1 tablespoon ginger paste
1 tablespoon garlic paste
4 tablespoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt

HERBY POTATOES

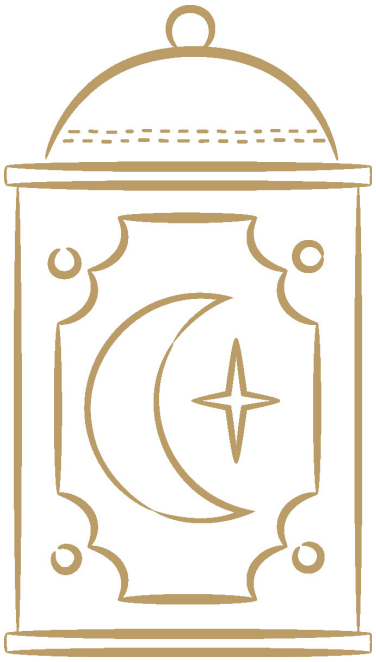
500g small new potatoes, halved
40g butter
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh mint
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt

Method

Preheat the oven to 190°C (gas mark 5). Cut a few deep slits into the chicken flesh, then place the pieces in a bowl with all the remaining chicken ingredients and mix really well to coat the chicken, rubbing the spices into the slits. Leave in the fridge for 1–2 hours to marinate.

Line a roasting tin with foil and place the chicken in the tin. Drizzle with a little oil, cover with foil and cook in the oven for 30–40 minutes, removing the foil halfway through. The chicken will release juices as it cooks – when the juices run clear, the chicken is done.

For the herby potatoes, boil the potatoes in a saucepan of water for 12–15 minutes, or until tender. Drain and return to the pan, then add the remaining potato ingredients and coat the potatoes in the buttery herb sauce.



Masala Roast Chicken & Herby Potatoes

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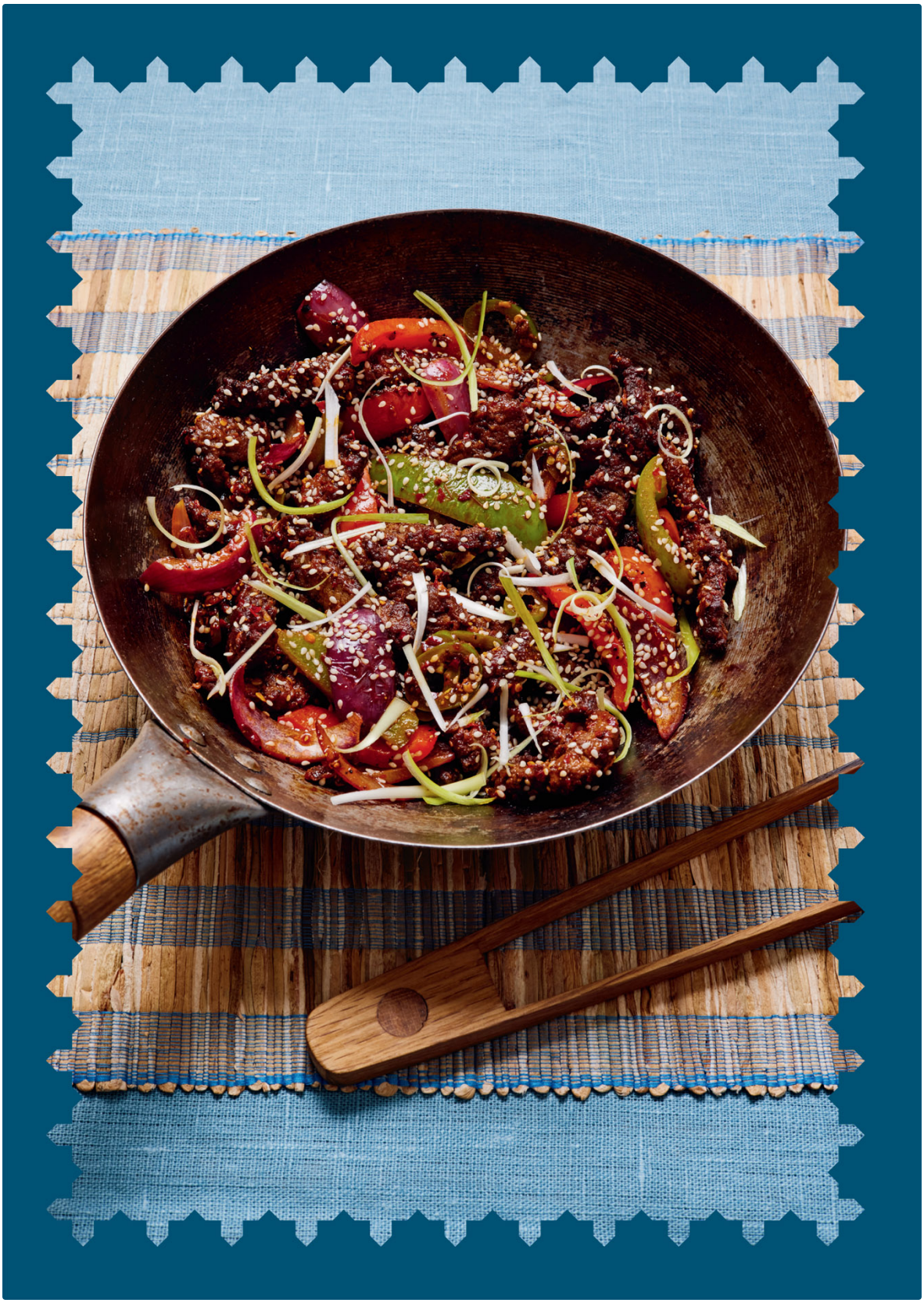

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Sweet & Sour Prawns

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 20 minutes

Succulent king prawns tossed in a sweet and sour sauce – you really don't need any special ingredients for this recipe and it is so easy to put together. Prawns really don't take long to cook so it's the perfect quick recipe. This is definitely a winner in our household.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons cornflour
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar
220g tin of pineapple chunks in juice
2 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
2 tablespoons sesame oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 tablespoon chilli flakes
1 onion, thinly sliced
½ red pepper, cut into chunks
½ green pepper, cut into chunks

300g raw peeled king prawns

GARNISH
1 spring onion, julienned
1 jalapeño chilli, sliced (optional)

Method

Place the cornflour and water in a medium bowl and mix to a paste. Add the soy sauce, rice vinegar, sugar, pineapple juice from the tin and sweet chilli sauce and stir well to make a smooth sauce.

Heat a wok on a medium heat. Add the oil, garlic, chilli flakes and onion and stir-fry for 5–6 minutes until lightly golden. Add the peppers and pineapple and stir-fry for 2–3 minutes on a high heat. Pour in the sauce and cook for another 2 minutes.

Add the prawns, mix everything together and stir-fry for 8 minutes on a medium heat until the prawns are cooked through. Garnish with spring onion and sliced chilli.

Sweet & Sour Prawns

Chicken Chow Mein

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 35 minutes

My children absolutely love noodles and this is my go-to meal when I'm stuck for ideas – chicken strips tossed with egg noodles and crunchy vegetables for texture, flavour, colour and nutrients. This is not a saucy dish – everything is evenly coated with seasonings and every mouthful is light but flavourful.

Ingredients

300g dried medium egg noodles
3–4 tablespoons oil
1 onion, sliced
600g chicken breast, cut into 1cm strips
1 jalapeño chilli, finely chopped
20g fresh ginger, peeled and grated
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
80g cabbage, shredded
1 carrot, julienned
2 teaspoons Chinese five spice powder
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon chilli powder

5 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon white or rice vinegar
½ red pepper, thinly sliced
½ green pepper, thinly sliced
6–7 tablespoons chilli and garlic sauce
2 tablespoons sriracha sauce
salt

GARNISH
2 spring onions, finely chopped
1 teaspoon nigella seeds
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

Method

Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, drain and set aside.

Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan on a medium heat and stir-fry the onion until soft and translucent. Add the chicken, fresh chilli, ginger and garlic and cook for about 25 minutes until the chicken is cooked through and there's only a little moisture left. Add the cabbage and carrot and stir for 3 minutes until the cabbage has almost wilted but still has a bite to it.

Add the five spice powder, black pepper, chilli powder, soy sauce, vinegar and red and green peppers, then season with salt. Add the chilli and garlic sauce and

sriracha for extra kick and stir-fry for another 2–3 minutes.

Add the noodles and toss everything together to coat them in the sauce. Serve garnished with spring onions, nigella seeds and sesame seeds.

Feel free to adjust the spices and sauces if you like. Add more sauces if you like a wetter dish or more chilli powder or sriracha if you like it spicy. Sliced beef or raw king prawns also make a great chow mein instead of the chicken.

Chicken Chow Mein

Sticky Lamb Chops

MAKES
10

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Marinating 1-2 hrs
Cook 25-30 mins

My kids say these are the best lamb chops they have ever tasted. Sticky, saucy and barbecue-y – I think you'll love them too!

Ingredients

10 lamb chops
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon oil
chopped spring onion, to garnish

BARBECUE SAUCE
6 tablespoons tomato passata
2 tablespoons barbecue sauce
3 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Method

Place the lamb chops in a bowl, add the chilli powder, paprika, garlic paste and black pepper and mix to coat. Marinate in the fridge for 1–2 hours.

Heat the oil in a saucepan on a medium heat, add the chops and cook for 25 minutes, turning regularly, or until cooked to your liking. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Place all the sauce ingredients in the lamb pan and simmer for 2 minutes, then add the chops to the sauce and coat well. Serve garnished with chopped spring onion.

Egg-fried Rice

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 25 minutes
Cook 30 minutes

This Indo-Chinese rice is loaded with veggies and fluffy scrambled eggs. Perfect on its own or as a side with Orange Chilli Chicken (see page 95) or Sweet & Sour Prawns (see page 77).

Ingredients

250ml water
125g basmati rice
30g butter
2 eggs
2 tablespoons oil
1 onion, diced
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chilli paste
30g carrot, grated
30g cabbage, finely shredded
½ red pepper, diced

½ green pepper, diced
30g tinned sweetcorn, drained
30g green beans
3 tablespoons chilli sauce
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
2 spring onions, finely chopped, plus extra to garnish
salt and ground black pepper

Method

Pour the water into a medium saucepan, bring to the boil and add salt to taste. Add the rice and cook uncovered for 10–12 minutes until it is 80% cooked. It needs to be cooked on the outside but the inside should be a little firm as the rice will cook further when you fry it. Drain in a colander and set aside.

Heat the butter in a medium frying pan on a medium heat, crack the eggs into the pan and season with black pepper and salt. Scramble the eggs until cooked through, then remove from the pan and set aside.

Heat the oil in same pan, add the onion, ginger paste, garlic paste, chilli paste, grated carrot, cabbage, red and green peppers, sweetcorn and green beans. Stir-fry for a few minutes to soften the veggies, then add the chilli sauce, soy sauce and spring onions and season with salt.

Throw in the scramble eggs, stir in, then add the rice and very gently stir, making sure not to break the rice. Cover the pan with a lid and cook on a low heat for 10 minutes until the rice fluffs up and is cooked through. Serve garnished with spring onions.

Spicy Beef

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Marinating 30 mins
Cook 10 minutes

This popular Chinese take-away dish is easy to recreate at home. Crispy fried beef is tossed in a spicy chilli sauce – it's amazingly delicious and flavourful. What's not to love? Serve on a bed of noodles or Egg-fried Rice (see page 81).

Ingredients

500g lean beef steak, cut into 5mm strips
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon Chinese five spice powder
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 tablespoon sesame oil
2 tablespoons cornflour
oil, for deep-frying

SPICY SAUCE

1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 red onion, thickly sliced
½ red pepper, thickly sliced
½ green pepper, thickly sliced
1 jalapeño chilli, finely sliced
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons chilli and garlic sauce
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 tablespoon chilli flakes
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt

GARNISH

2 spring onions, julienned
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

Method

Place the beef strips in a bowl with the soy sauce, beaten egg, five spice powder, black pepper, vinegar, ginger paste, garlic paste and sesame oil, mix well and leave to marinate for 30 minutes.

Place the cornflour in a shallow bowl, add the beef and toss to coat in the cornflour.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the beef

strips in batches for 3 minutes until crispy golden-brown, then drain on kitchen paper.

For the spicy sauce, heat the sesame oil in a wok on a medium-high heat, add all the remaining sauce ingredients, stir well and cook for 3–4 minutes to soften the vegetables a little. Add the beef and stir to coat in the sauce. Serve garnished with spring onions and sesame seeds.

If you want to include more veg, you can also add baby corn and broccoli florets to this dish at the same times as the peppers.

Spicy Beef

Saucy Gazebo Chicken

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Marinating 1 hour
Cook 30 minutes

Gazebo chicken is absolutely full of flavour – tasty, spicy, saucy, tender and finger-licking good. Serve with rice or chips and salad.

Ingredients

1 chicken, cut into 8 pieces
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon white vinegar
3 tablespoons cornflour
1 tablespoon chapati flour
1–2 eggs, beaten
oil, for deep-frying

SAUCE
2 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon garlic paste
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 tablespoon chilli powder
3 tablespoons tomato ketchup
½ red pepper, cut into chunks
½ green pepper, cut into chunks

GARNISH
2 spring onions, finely chopped
15g fresh coriander, finely chopped

Method

Place the chicken pieces in a large bowl, add the lemon juice, salt, black pepper and vinegar and leave to marinate in the fridge for 1 hour or overnight if possible.

For the sauce, heat the oil in a saucepan on a low heat and add the garlic paste, salt, black pepper, chilli flakes, chilli powder and tomato ketchup. Cook on a low heat for 2 minutes, then add the red and green peppers and cook for a further 3–4 minutes until softened but still with a little bite.

Take the chicken out of the fridge and add the cornflour, chapati flour and enough beaten egg to coat the chicken all over. Mix well.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the pieces of chicken for 10–12 minutes until cooked through, then

drain on kitchen paper. Coat the chicken pieces in the sauce and garnish with spring onions and chopped coriander.

Saucy Gazebo Chicken

Paneer & Mogo Sizzler

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 25 minutes

This is one of my favourite vegetarian dishes, something my mum makes when we have a get together. The pieces of fried cheese and mogo are tossed into a spicy and tangy sauce. You really don't need anything else with it, it tastes so good just on its own.

Ingredients

200g frozen mogo (cassava)
3 tablespoons plain flour
3 tablespoons cornflour
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
100ml water
200g paneer, cut into 2cm cubes
oil, for deep-frying
2 spring onions, finely chopped, to garnish

TANGY SAUCE
1 tablespoon oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped

2 tablespoons chilli flakes
½ red pepper, cut into 2cm chunks
½ green pepper, cut into 2cm chunks
1 large onion, cut into 2cm chunks
2 tablespoons tomato ketchup
2 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
3 tablespoons tamarind sauce, plus extra for drizzling
1 fresh tomato, chopped

Method

Place the mogo in a steamer and cook for 25 minutes or until just tender with a slight bite to it. Do not overcook or it will become mushy. Alternatively, cook it in a saucepan of boiling water if you prefer. Cut the mogo into 3cm chunks and set aside.

Place the plain flour in a large bowl with the cornflour, black pepper and salt. Mix well, adding enough of the water to make a smooth, free-flowing batter. It should be neither thick nor thin. Set aside.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the chunks of mogo in batches for 3–4 minutes until golden all over, then drain in a colander to remove excess oil.

Dip the paneer cubes in the batter and drop them carefully in batches into the hot oil. Fry until the paneer pieces are golden-brown and crispy all over, then drain in the colander.

For the sauce, heat the oil in a large wok on a medium-high heat, add the garlic, chilli flakes, red and green peppers and onion and stir-fry for 3–4 minutes until the vegetables are softened but still have a bite to them. Add the ketchup, sweet chilli sauce, soy sauce, tamarind sauce and fresh tomato and cook for 3–4 minutes until the sauce thickens slightly.

Add the mogo chunks and paneer and toss to combine with the sauce. Garnish with spring onions and drizzle some extra tamarind sauce on top if you like it extra tangy.

You can swap the paneer for firm tofu if you prefer.

Paneer & Mogo Sizzler

Sweet & Sour Chicken

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Marinating 1-2 hrs
Cook 10 minutes

This tantalizing Indo-Chinese saucy fried chicken really brings the sauces and spices together so well. This is a great combo of sweet and savoury, and tastes as good as it looks. It's a family favourite for us and might soon be for you too! Serve with chips and salad.

Ingredients

500g chicken breast, cut into 1cm strips
1 egg, beaten
1½ tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons cornflour
2 tablespoons rice flour
2 tablespoons paprika
oil, for deep-frying

SWEET & SOUR SAUCE

2 tablespoons sesame oil
5–6 curry leaves
1 teaspoon chilli paste
1 teaspoon sesame seeds
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon rice vinegar
250g sweet chilli sauce
2 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons tomato ketchup
½ red pepper, cut into 3mm slices
½ green pepper, cut into 3mm slices

GARNISH

finely chopped spring onions
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

Method

Place the chicken in a bowl with the beaten egg, soy sauce, ginger paste, garlic paste, chilli flakes, cumin, ground coriander, black pepper, cornflour, rice flour and paprika and leave to marinate in the fridge for 1–2 hours.

For the sauce, heat a large wok on a medium heat, add the oil, curry leaves, chilli paste and sesame seeds and sizzle for 30–40 seconds – the curry leaves will give out a nutty, lemony aroma. Add the soy sauce, rice vinegar, sweet chilli sauce, honey, ketchup and the red

and green peppers. Simmer the sauce on a low heat for 5 minutes, then remove from the heat and set aside.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the chicken strips in batches for 4–5 minutes or until crispy and cooked through, taking care not to overcrowd the pan. Drain in a colander to remove excess oil.

Toss the fried chicken in the sauce, making sure to coat the chicken strips completely.Serve garnished with chopped spring onions and a sprinkling of sesame seeds.

Vegetable Noodles

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 12 minutes

This is probably one of the easiest and most delicious noodle dishes to make. These noodles can be rustled up in no time at all. Perfect on their own, or on the side with Sweet & Sour Chicken (see page 88).

Ingredients

150g dried medium egg noodles
2 tablespoons oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 jalapeño chilli, finely sliced
1 onion, finely sliced
50g cabbage, finely shredded
50g carrot, julienned
50g green beans
½ red pepper, finely sliced
½ green pepper, finely sliced
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
2 tablespoons chilli sauce

1 teaspoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 teaspoon salt

GARNISH
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
finely chopped spring onions

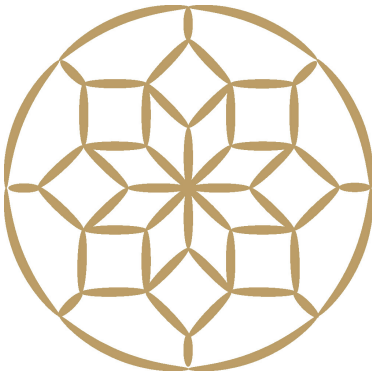
Method

Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, drain and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large wok on a high heat, add the garlic, sliced jalapeño and onion and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the cabbage, carrot, green beans and red and green peppers. Stir-fry for 3–4 minutes until softened but still with some bite. Do not overcook the veggies.

Reduce the heat to medium, add the soy sauce, chilli sauce, rice vinegar, black pepper, chilli flakes and salt and toss with the noodles for 2 minutes. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and chopped spring onions to garnish.

You could add mangetout, sugar snaps, frozen peas or baby corn with the other vegetables if you fancy a change.



Lamb Stir-fry

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 20 minutes

This is a one-pot recipe – lamb, veg and noodles tossed together in a tangy spicy sauce. It's so delicious, vibrant and easy to make.

Ingredients

200g dried medium egg noodles
150g lean lamb steaks
2–3 garlic cloves, chopped
½ teaspoon chilli flakes
1 teaspoon Chinese five spice powder
1 tablespoon honey
3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon sriracha sauce
2 tablespoons sesame oil
1 fresh chilli, finely chopped
20g fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
150g packet of mixed stir-fry vegetables

1 tablespoon dark soy sauce

GARNISH
finely chopped fresh coriander
finely chopped spring onions
½ teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
½ teaspoon nigella seeds

Method

Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, drain and set aside.

Remove any fat from the lamb steaks and slice the meat into 1cm strips. Place in a bowl with the garlic, chilli flakes, five spice powder, honey, Worcestershire sauce and sriracha sauce for that extra kick, stir everything together and leave to marinate for 10 minutes.

Heat the sesame oil in a wok on a high heat, add the fresh chilli and lamb strips (reserving the marinade), and stir-fry for 3–4 minutes to brown the meat. Add the chopped ginger, then pour in the reserved marinade, the stir-fry vegetables, noodles and soy sauce. Toss everything together and cook for 2–3 minutes until the vegetables are just tender.

Garnish with chopped coriander and spring onions and sprinkle over sesame and nigella seeds to pretty it up. All done and you're ready to tuck in!

Lamb Stir-fry

Cauliflower Manchurian

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 20 minutes

Also known as Gobi Manchurian, this popular Indo-Chinese dish has crispy cauliflower florets tossed in a spicy sauce.

Ingredients

1 cauliflower, cut into florets
1 tablespoon oil, plus extra for deep-frying
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 fresh green chilli, chopped
1 red onion, diced
2 spring onions, finely sliced, plus extra to garnish
½ red pepper, diced
½ green pepper, diced
2 tablespoons tomato ketchup
2 tablespoons chilli sauce
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon chilli flakes
1 tablespoon ground black pepper

1 teaspoon salt

BATTER
100g plain flour
20g cornflour
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon Kashmiri chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
200ml water

Method

Cook the cauliflower florets in a large saucepan of boiling water for 8–10 minutes, then drain in a colander and set aside.

For the batter, mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl, then slowly add the water, stirring all the time to make a smooth batter thick enough to coat the cauliflower. Drop the florets into the batter and stir gently to coat.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the cauliflower florets in batches for about 6 minutes until golden and crisp, then drain in a colander to remove excess oil.

Heat the oil in a large wok on a low heat, add the garlic, chopped chilli, red onion, spring onions and red

and green peppers and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the ketchup, chilli sauce, soy sauce, rice vinegar, chilli flakes, black pepper and salt and heat through for 1 minute.

Toss the fried florets in the sauce, making sure to coat them properly. Serve the cauliflower in a bowl, garnished with sliced spring onions.

Cauliflower Manchurian

Orange Chilli Chicken

SERVES
5

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Marinating 30 mins
Cook 25 minutes

This Chinese-style chicken is definitely a popular dish in our home. Chunks of boneless chicken are fried until golden and crispy, then tossed in a sweet and spicy orange sauce, which is full of flavour. Serve with Vegetable Noodles (see page 89) or Egg-fried Rice (see page 81).

Ingredients

600g boneless chicken thighs or breast, cut into 3cm pieces
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon white pepper
2 teaspoons Chinese five spice powder
1 tablespoon garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
2 eggs, beaten
125g cornflour
60ml water
oil, for deep-frying

ORANGE SAUCE

3 tablespoons dark soy sauce
2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest
6 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
3 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons cornflour
125ml water
2 tablespoons oil
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tablespoon chilli flakes
1 jalapeño chilli, finely chopped
3 tablespoons chilli sauce

GARNISH

1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
finely chopped spring onion
orange slices

Method

Place the chicken in a large bowl with the soy sauce, white pepper, five spice powder, garlic, salt and bicarbonate of soda and leave to marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Whisk the eggs, cornflour and water together in another large bowl, add the marinated chicken and toss to coat in the mixture.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the

chicken pieces in batches for 10 minutes or until golden all over and cooked through, then drain on kitchen paper.

For the orange sauce, mix the soy sauce, orange zest and juice, sugar, cornflour and water together in a bowl and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large wok on a low heat, add the garlic, chilli flakes and jalapeño and cook for about 1 minute. Pour in the orange sauce and stir. Add the chilli sauce and simmer gently for 8–10 minutes until it thickens slightly. Add the crispy fried chicken pieces and toss around until coated nicely. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and spring onions and garnish with orange slices.

Orange Chilli Chicken

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Recipe List

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Beef Bhuna

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Chicken Balti

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 25 minutes
Cook 1 hour

After I got married, my mother-in-law made this delicious Chicken Balti for me – tender pieces of boneless chicken in an aromatic balti curry sauce. The flavour is phenomenal with golden brown onions, tangy tomatoes, warm spices, a subtle taste of fenugreek and the heat of the chillies – you will not be disappointed. Traditionally, a balti curry is served in or cooked in a metal bowl-like cooking vessel similar to a wok. Serve with Naan (see pages 130-1), Roti (see pages 126-7) or Basmati Rice (see page 132).

Ingredients

250g tinned chopped tomatoes
6 tablespoons oil
2 onions, finely chopped
600g chicken breast, cut into 3cm chunks
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 tablespoon chilli powder
1 tablespoon Kashmiri chilli powder

1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon garam masala
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon dried fenugreek leaves
1 fresh tomato, finely chopped
250ml water
½ red pepper, cut into 3cm chunks
½ green pepper, cut into 3cm chunks
1 red onion, cut into chunks
finely chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

WHOLE SPICES
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 bay leaves
2 cinnamon sticks
2–3 cardamom pods
5–6 black peppercorns
2–3 star anise
5–6 cloves

Method

Blitz the tinned tomatoes in a food processor until smooth, then set aside.

Heat a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the oil, whole spices and the onions and cook until the onions are nice and golden brown, stirring occasionally so they

don’t burn. Add the chicken, garlic paste and ginger paste, stir and cook for 25 minutes – the liquid released from the chicken will evaporate and you will see the oil coming through.

At this point, add the chilli powder, Kashmiri chilli powder, turmeric, ground coriander, cumin, garam masala, salt and fenugreek. Cook the spices for 2 minutes, then add the puréed tomatoes and fresh tomato, stir, cover and cook for 10–12 minutes on a low-medium heat until the tomatoes have softened and dissolved. You should be able to smell the delicious aroma about now.

Pour in the water, add the red and green peppers and onion and simmer on a low heat for 8–10 minutes until the sauce thickens into a gravy-like consistency. Serve garnished with chopped coriander.

Adjust the amount of chilli used in this recipe to your desired heat level. Adding whole spices makes the Chicken Balti so fragrant.

Chicken Balti

Naan Gosht

SERVES
6

TIME
Prep 25 minutes
Cook 1 hr 30 mins

My dear aunt Khadija probably makes the best version of this lamb curry I've ever tasted and luckily she showed me how. The succulent lamb bathes in a thick rich gravy – that's what we love about this special and tantalizing dish. So aromatic, every mouthful is full of flavour – from the caramelized onions and warm spices to the tangy tomatoes – one serving will not be enough. Traditionally, it's served with a type of fluffy bread (naan) to mop up the rich, spicy sauce; *gosht* means 'meat', hence the name. It's a nostalgic dish for me, traditionally made on special occasions, so it holds amazing memories of my childhood. Serve with Basmati Rice (see page 132), Naan (see pages 130-1) and Classic Kachumbar Salad (see page 122).

Ingredients

250g tinned chopped tomatoes
5 tablespoons oil
3 onions, finely chopped
1 heaped tablespoon ginger paste

1 heaped tablespoon garlic paste
1kg diced mixed lamb shoulder and leg
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 teaspoons chilli powder
2 teaspoons Kashmiri chilli powder
1 teaspoon tandoori masala
2 fresh tomatoes, finely diced
2 tablespoons tomato purée
about 500ml water
salt

WHOLE SPICES

2 cinnamon sticks
2 bay leaves
4–5 black peppercorns
4–5 cardamom pods
4–5 cloves
1 teaspoon cumin seeds

GARNISH

chopped fresh coriander
2–3 bullet chillies, sliced

Method

Blitz the tinned tomatoes in a food processor until smooth, then set aside.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the whole spices and fry for about 20 seconds until they start to sizzle. Add the onions and fry gently until they are meltingly soft, deeply browned and rich. Do not rush this part – this step is important as the overall colour of the curry depends on it and it's one of the key steps in making an amazing curry.

Add the ginger paste and garlic paste and cook for 30 seconds to cook off the raw smell. Add the lamb, black pepper and turmeric, stir, cover and cook on a medium heat for 30 minutes until the liquid from the meat has evaporated and the oil comes through to the top and sides of the pan.

Add the ground coriander, ground cumin, chilli powder, Kashmiri chilli powder, tandoori masala, fresh tomatoes, puréed tomatoes and tomato purée and cook until the tomatoes soften and dissolve. Season with salt and pour in some water, depending on how thick or thin you want the curry. I prefer a gravy-like consistency. Simmer until the curry thickens and the meat is tender, then garnish with chopped coriander and sliced bullet chillies.

Peel and halve 5–6 baby potatoes, deep fry until cooked and golden, then pop them in your curry just before serving.

Veg Biryani

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 55 minutes

Biryani is a rice dish made with layers of rice, spices and usually meat, but this recipe is for vegetable lovers. Packed with veggies, warm spices like garam masala and fresh coriander and mint, this is a perfect hearty meal, super-delicious and bursting with flavour. Serve with Sweet Yogurt Lassi (see page 145) and Mint & Coriander Yogurt Chutney (see page 137).

Ingredients

2 tablespoons ghee
2 tablespoons shop-bought fried onions
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint
½ red pepper, cut into 3cm chunks
½ green pepper, cut into 3cm chunks
80ml water
1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

RICE

600g basmati rice
1.5 litres water
2 tablespoons oil
1 tablespoon salt

VEGETABLE MASALA

4 tablespoons oil
2 onions, finely diced
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
2 teaspoons chilli paste
250g frozen mixed vegetables
1 potato, cut into quarters
1 small aubergine, cut into 3cm chunks
1 serving Vegetable Biryani Masala, page 169
½ red pepper, cut into 3cm chunks
½ green pepper, cut into 3cm chunks
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander
3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint
2 tablespoons chopped spring onion
100g plain yogurt

WHOLE SPICES

1–2 cinnamon sticks
3–4 cloves
3–4 black peppercorns
2–3 cardamom pods
1–2 bay leaves
1–2 star anise
1 teaspoon cumin seeds

Method

Wash the rice in a sieve under cold running water until the water runs clear, then soak in a bowl of cold water for 30 minutes. This will reduce the cooking time and help the rice to cook evenly.

Pour the water into a large saucepan, bring to the boil and add the oil and salt. Add the rice and cook uncovered for 8–10 minutes until it is 70–75% cooked. It needs to be cooked on the outside but the inside should be a little firm as the rice will cook further when you cook the biryani. Drain in a colander, then rinse under cold running water to stop it from cooking further. Drain very well, spread the rice on a large plate and leave to cool completely, so the grains are separate and the rice does not go mushy.

For the vegetable masala, heat the oil in a large saucepan on a low heat, then add the whole spices. Stir and let the spices sizzle for a few seconds. Add the onions and fry for 15 minutes until golden brown. Add the ginger paste, garlic paste and chilli paste and cook for 2 minutes until the raw smell goes away.

Add the frozen mixed vegetables, potato, aubergine, and the Biryani Masala spices. Cover and cook on a medium heat for about 15 minutes until the potato is almost cooked. (If the pan is looking too dry and not enough steam is building from the frozen veg, add some water to help the potato in particular cook.)

Then, add the red and green peppers, fresh coriander, mint and spring onion and it's already smelling so good. Stir in the yogurt to give a creamy consistency.

Grease the bottom of a wide saucepan with ghee and arrange half the rice in an even layer in the bottom. Top with the vegetable masala, then the remaining rice on top in an even layer. Scatter with the fried onions, chopped coriander and mint, and red and green pepper chunks.

Poke some holes in the rice to allow steam to escape and drizzle the water into the holes. Dot the remaining ghee over the top of the rice to add extra flavour. Cover the saucepan with a tight-fitting lid so the steam doesn't escape and cook on a low heat for 15 minutes. With the build-up of steam, the rice will finish cooking and fluff up and the biryani will be ready. Serve with lemon wedges for squeezing.

Long-grain basmati rice is best for making a good biryani.

If you have time, crush your own fresh ginger, garlic and chillies into a paste using a pestle and mortar. It makes all the difference.

Veg Biryani

Beef Kheema Pilau

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 40 minutes
Cook 55 minutes

Being a busy mum, I know how difficult life can get. If you are looking for a hearty, soulful, gloriously aromatic meal but are short on time, this one-pot dish is perfect for you, especially in Ramadan when you have so many things going on. Rice is a staple in our home – it's tasty, filling and best of all, really easy to make. For any pilau, spices are key and here the fragrant smell and taste come from the whole spices, cumin, coriander and garam masala. This pilau is perfect when you have guests round – as soon as they enter your home, the aroma will most definitely be inviting. Serve with Sweet Yogurt Lassi (see page 145) and Classic Kachumbar Salad (see page 122).

Ingredients

300g basmati rice
3 tablespoons oil
1 onion, finely chopped

1 teaspoon chilli paste
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
500g beef mince
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon garam masala
1 litre water
salt

WHOLE SPICES

½ teaspoon cumin seeds
1–2 cinnamon sticks
1–2 bay leaves
3–4 cardamom pods
3–4 black peppercorns
3–4 cloves
1–2 star anise

GARNISH

finely chopped fresh coriander
lemon wedges

Method

Wash the rice in a sieve under cold running water until the water runs clear, then soak in a bowl of cold water

for 30 minutes. This will reduce the cooking time and help the rice to cook evenly.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the whole spices and fry for about 30–40 seconds until they start to sizzle. Add the onion and fry gently until it is meltingly soft, deeply browned and rich. Do not rush this part – this step is important as the colour of the onion will determine the colour of the finished dish. If not browned enough, the rice will look pale – we want to achieve a beige-brown colour.

Add 3–4 tablespoons of water and simmer for 1–2 minutes to soften the onion and release a lovely brownish tinge. Add the chilli paste, ginger paste and garlic paste and cook on a low heat for about 1 minute, to cook off the raw smell.

Add the beef mince and stir, making sure to break up the lumps. The colour will turn from pink to brown and the mince will start to release liquid. Cook on a medium heat for 20 minutes until only a little moisture is left. At this point, add the cumin, ground coriander, chilli powder, black pepper and garam masala to give the dish some warming flavour and aroma and cook for 1–2 minutes, stirring so the spices are mixed in nicely.

Add the rice to the pot and mix in with the kheema, then pour in the water, season with salt and stir. Partially cover the pan with a lid (not completely or the water may boil over). Cook on a medium heat for 15 minutes

until the water has been absorbed, then give it a stir once without disturbing the rice too much. Cover fully with the lid and cook for another 15 minutes on a low heat – with the build up of steam, the rice will fully cook and fluff up. Serve on a large platter, garnished with chopped coriander and lemon wedges.

TIP If you like, you can add some garden peas to this pilau to add a pop of colour, sweetness and texture. Throw them in when you add the rice.

Peri-Peri Sea Bass

SERVES
2–3

TIME
Prep 25 minutes
Marinating 30 mins
Cook 30 minutes

Sea bass is a delicate white fish with soft flaky flesh. Here it's prepared in a tangy peri-peri marinade, with fresh coriander and chilli to add a little kick. You could also use red snapper, sea bream or grey mullet, if you prefer. Serve with Basmati Rice (see page 132) and salad leaves.

Ingredients

2 whole sea bass, 350g each, gutted and scaled
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 lemons
5 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons peri-peri seasoning
1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon garlic paste
1 fresh chilli

30g fresh coriander, plus extra to garnish
1 lime, cut into wedges, to serve

Method

Wash the sea bass inside and out and pat dry with kitchen paper. Use a sharp knife to make 3–4 deep slashes on both sides of each fish to help the flesh cook evenly. Season the sea bass with the sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Juice one of the lemons and slice the other. Place the olive oil in a shallow dish with the peri-peri seasoning, paprika, garlic paste and lemon juice. Blitz the fresh chilli and coriander to a paste in a food processor and mix in. Lay the fish in the dish and coat inside and out in the marinade, rubbing it into the slashes. Lay the lemon slices on top and marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4) and line a roasting tin with foil. Lift the marinated fish into the tin and cook in the oven for about 25 minutes, uncovered, until the fish is cooked through – the flesh should feel firm to the touch and should be flaky and white. Garnish with chopped coriander and serve with lime wedges.

TIP Check the fish is fresh before you buy – the eyes should be clear and slightly bulging, the gills should be a nice bright red and the flesh should be firm and shiny.

Peri-Peri Sea Bass

Vegetable Karahi

SERVES
4–5

TIME
Prep 45 minutes
Cook 50 minutes

Try this for a lighter iftar meal, packed with vegetables in a spicy masala made with warm spices, curry leaves to infuse some warmth and chilli powder to add heat. My grandmother used to make this delicious curry in a karahi, a deep wok traditionally made of cast iron, used in South Asian cooking. It distributes heat evenly, meats brown better and vegetables cook faster and it lasts a lifetime. If you don't own one, you can still make this dish in a nonstick pot. Just as delish!

Ingredients

1 potato, peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
1 carrot, peeled and cut into 1cm slices
1 small dhoodi (bottle gourd), peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
1 aubergine, cut into 3cm chunks
1 drumstick, peeled and cut into finger-length pieces
2 onions
200g tinned chopped tomatoes

4 tablespoons oil
5–6 curry leaves
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 teaspoon chilli paste
100g frozen peas
100g tinned sweetcorn kernels, drained
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
60ml water
½ red pepper, chopped into 3cm chunks
½ green pepper, chopped into 3cm chunks
salt
chopped fresh coriander, to garnish

Method

Heat a large saucepan of boiling water on a high heat. Add the potato, carrot, dhoodi, aubergine and drumstick and cook for 15–20 minutes until the vegetables are almost tender but still have a bite. Drain in a colander and set aside.

Dice one onion finely and purée the other onion in a food processor to give the karahi texture. Remove from the food processor and blitz the tomatoes in it until smooth, then set aside.

Heat a large, wide saucepan on a medium heat, add the oil, curry leaves and all the onions. Cover and cook for 15 minutes until golden. Add the ginger paste, garlic paste and chilli paste and cook for 1 minute to cook off the rawness. Add the partially cooked vegetables, peas and sweetcorn, ground cumin, ground coriander, chilli powder, turmeric and puréed tomatoes. Season with salt and mix gently, making sure not to break the vegetables.

Cover and cook on a medium heat for 10–15 minutes. Add the water and red and green peppers and cook for a further 5–6 minutes. Serve garnished with chopped coriander.

You can also add sliced courgettes with the peppers – so healthy and delicious and no need to peel.

To add some creamy goodness to your karahi, you could stir in 4–5 tablespoons of coconut milk.

Vegetable Karahi

King Prawn & Fish Curry

SERVES
4–5

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Marinating 30 mins
Cook 40 minutes

This aromatic and colourful curry was made regularly by my grandmother. I remember early morning visits to the fish shop to buy fresh fish and prawns – my grandmother would tell me what to look for when buying fresh seafood. This is a quick and easy recipe, made even easier if you ask your fishmonger to fillet the fish for you. Any white fish works well in this recipe – try cod, whiting or mullet. Perfect with Khitchri (see pages 56-7) or Roti (see pages 126-7).

Ingredients

4 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon chilli paste
2 teaspoons garlic paste
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
300g white fish fillets, cut into 5cm chunks
200g raw peeled and deveined king prawns

1 large fresh tomato
5 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
5–6 curry leaves
2 onions, finely diced
1 tablespoon tomato passata
100ml water

GARNISH
10g fresh coriander, chopped
2 spring onions, finely chopped

Method

Place the lemon juice in a large bowl with the chilli paste, garlic paste, ground cumin, ground coriander, turmeric and dill. Add the fish and prawns and mix to coat all over. Marinate in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Use a knife to make a shallow X on the bottom of the tomato, then place in a bowl of boiling water for 40–50 seconds until the skin starts to peel off easily. Skin and finely chop the tomato and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan with a lid on a medium heat, then add the cumin seeds and curry leaves – they will start to sizzle and smell fragrant. Stir in the onions and fry, uncovered, until lightly golden. Add the chopped tomato and passata and cook for 4–5 minutes until the tomato softens and dissolves.

Add the fish and prawns, cover and cook on a medium heat for 25 minutes, carefully turning the fish and prawns halfway, without breaking the fish. Add the water and simmer for 6–8 minutes until slightly thickened. Serve garnished with chopped coriander and spring onions.

Fresh fish shouldn't smell fishy or have a strong smell, just a clean, fresh smell of the sea. Press your finger against the body of the fish – it should be firm and spring back to the touch.

King Prawn & Fish Curry

Beef Kofta Curry

SERVES
3

TIME
Prep 40 minutes
Cook 1 hour

Tender, juicy beef meatballs are simmered in a luscious, aromatic and saucy curry, full of fragrant Indian spices. This is one of my husband's favourite curries and one he likes to make himself for the family. You could use chicken or lamb mince if you prefer. Serve with Roti (see pages 126-7) or Naan (see pages 130-1).

Ingredients

500g beef mince
2 fresh chillies
5g fresh coriander
1 onion, quartered
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
130g fresh breadcrumbs

CURRY

5–6 tablespoons oil
2 onions, grated
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
400g tomato passata
1 serving of Perfect Curry Spice Mix, page 169
400ml water

WHOLE SPICES

2 cinnamon sticks
4–5 black peppercorns
4–5 cloves
3–4 cardamom pods
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1–2 star anise

GARNISH

½ teaspoon garam masala
finely chopped fresh coriander

Method

Place the beef mince in a food processor with the fresh chillies, fresh coriander and onion and blitz until the mixture is almost smooth but still has texture to it. This will help bind the ingredients together to form the meatballs. Add the chilli powder, ground coriander, cumin, black pepper, salt, ginger paste, garlic paste and breadcrumbs and mix everything together.

Rub some oil on the palms of your hands and roll the beef mixture into smooth meatballs about 3cm across. Place on a tray and set aside in the fridge while you prepare the curry.

For the curry, heat the oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the whole spices and sizzle for 30–40 seconds, then add the onions and fry until golden brown. Add the ginger paste and garlic paste and cook for 30–40 seconds to cook off the raw smell.

Arrange the meatballs in the pan, cover and cook for 25 minutes, making sure to turn them gently halfway through so they don't stick to the pan. Once the liquid from the meatballs has evaporated and the oil comes through to the top, add the tomato passata and Perfect Curry Spice Mix. Stir the mixture carefully, making sure not to disturb the meatballs too much otherwise they can break.

Cover the pan and cook for 15 minutes until the passata starts to reduce. Pour in the water and simmer on a low heat for 12–15 minutes until the curry starts to thicken. The aroma around your home will be just amazing. Serve garnished with garam masala to add some warmth and chopped coriander to add some freshness.

TIP You can make the meatballs in advance and freeze them raw on a tray, then pack them into plastic bags. They will keep for up to a month in the freezer and come in handy on those busy days.

Lamb Biryani

SERVES
5

TIME
Prep 40 minutes
Marinating 1 hour
Cook 1 hr 15 mins

Biryani is a luxurious, elaborate, colourful and highly aromatic dish so it's traditionally made on special occasions. It's full of flavour, with spices and fresh herbs, perfectly cooked fragrant, fluffy grains of basmati rice and tender spiced lamb on the bone. When I was growing up, my grandmother would wake up early on Eid to make a big pot of Lamb Biryani, the main meal for the whole family to gather around. My mum would go early to give her a hand and I would stand and watch and give the masala a taste test. The house would be smelling so good, you could smell the aroma outside. Serve with Sweet Yogurt Lassi, Mint & Coriander Yogurt Chutney (see pages 145 and 137) and poppadoms.

Ingredients

1 teaspoon saffron threads
2 tablespoons milk

2 tablespoons ghee
10g fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped
10g fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
2–3 green bullet chillies, halved
½ red pepper, cut into 1cm dice
½ green pepper, cut into 1cm dice
80ml water
1 tablespoon pomegranate seeds, to garnish

RICE

700g basmati rice
2½ litres water
3 tablespoons oil
1 tablespoon salt
2 bay leaves
2 cinnamon sticks

LAMB MASALA

1kg mixed lamb shoulder and leg chunks
100g plain yogurt
1 teaspoon chilli paste
1 tablespoon ginger paste
1 tablespoon garlic paste
1 serving of Meat Biryani Masala, page 169
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander
5 tablespoons oil, plus extra for deep-frying
5 onions, finely sliced
3 tablespoons ghee
1 teaspoon salt

4 tablespoons lemon juice
200ml water

WHOLE SPICES
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2–3 cinnamon sticks
2–3 bay leaves
5–6 black peppercorns
5–6 cardamom pods
5–6 cloves
1–2 star anise

Method

The first step is to marinate the lamb. Place the lamb in a bowl with the yogurt (to tenderize it), the chilli paste, ginger paste and garlic paste, the Biryani Masala spices, and the fresh mint and coriander. Cover and marinate in the fridge for about 1 hour, to let the spices really infuse into the meat.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a medium-high heat until it reaches 180°C. Fry the sliced onions until nice and golden brown, making sure not to burn them. Drain on kitchen paper and set aside.

Wash the rice in a sieve under cold running water until the water runs clear, then soak in a bowl of cold water for 30 minutes. This will reduce the cooking time and help the rice to cook evenly.

Pour the water into a large pot, bring to the boil and add the oil, salt, bay leaves and cinnamon sticks. Add the rice and cook uncovered for 8–10 minutes until it is 70–75% cooked. It needs to be cooked on the outside but the inside should be a little firm as the rice will cook further when you cook the biryani. Drain in a colander, then rinse under cold running water to stop it from cooking further. Drain very well, spread the rice on a large plate and leave to cool completely, so the grains are separate and the rice does not go mushy.

For the lamb masala, heat the ghee in a large saucepan on a low heat, add the whole spices and allow to gently infuse in the oil for about 30 seconds. Add the marinated meat, stir and turn the heat up to medium. Cover and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally to make sure the meat doesn't stick or burn. If you have a pressure cooker, this will cut your cooking time in half. The lamb will release liquid as it cooks. Once the liquid has evaporated, sprinkle with the salt, add the lemon juice, water and half the fried onions, keeping the rest for garnish. Mix everything in and cook for 15 minutes on a low heat until the lamb is tender and the onions soften. The sauce will reduce and thicken.

Place the saffron threads in a small frying pan on a very low heat and warm through, taking care as the strands burn easily. When slightly crisp, crush with the back of a spoon and add to the milk.

Grease the bottom of a wide saucepan with ghee and arrange half the rice in an even layer in the bottom. Top with the lamb masala and sprinkle with a few of the remaining fried onions, some of the chopped coriander and mint and the halved bullet chillies, then add the remaining rice on top in an even layer. Drizzle over the saffron-infused milk to add aroma and colour to the rice, then finally scatter over the red and green pepper chunks, the remaining chopped coriander and mint and the remaining fried onions.

Poke some holes in the rice to allow steam to escape and drizzle the water into the holes. Dot the remaining ghee over the top of the rice to add extra flavour. Cover the saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, so the steam doesn't escape, and cook on a low heat for 20 minutes. With the build-up of steam, the rice will finish cooking and fluff up and the biryani will be ready. Serve on a large platter, garnished with pomegranate seeds to add a pop of colour.

You can also add a splash of rosewater on top of the rice when adding the saffron-infused milk, to add extra aroma.

Lamb Biryani

Chicken & Potato Curry

SERVES
3–4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 1 hr 10 mins

Chicken & Potato Curry is one of the easiest curries you can make, and it's delicious too which is why it's been ever so popular since I can remember. The traditional authentic spices make this curry spicy, fragrant and rich, and a staple in most Indian homes. Serve with Basmati Rice (see page 132), Roti (see pages 126-7) or Naan (see pages 130-1).

Ingredients

4 tablespoons oil
2 onions, finely chopped
1 whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces
1 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon garlic paste
250g tinned chopped tomatoes
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

1 tablespoon tomato purée
2 potatoes, peeled and quartered
500ml water
½ teaspoon salt

WHOLE SPICES
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
1–2 cinnamon sticks
3–4 cardamom pods
3–4 black peppercorns
3–4 cloves
1–2 star anise

GARNISH
½ teaspoon garam masala
chopped fresh coriander

Method

Heat the oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the whole spices and fry for about 20 seconds until they start to sizzle. Add the onions and fry gently until they are meltingly soft, deeply browned and rich. Do not rush this part – this step is important as the overall colour of the curry depends on it and it's one of the key steps in making an amazing curry.

Add the chicken, ginger paste and garlic paste, stir gently and cover the pan with a lid. Cook for 20–30 minutes until the liquid that is released from the chicken evaporates.

Blitz the tinned tomatoes in a food processor until smooth. Add to the pan with the chilli powder, cumin, ground coriander, turmeric, black pepper and tomato purée and stir in. Cover and cook for 20 minutes until the oil comes through to the top and sides of the pan.

Add the potatoes, water and salt and simmer on a low heat for another 20 minutes until the curry thickens slightly and the potatoes are tender, but not too soft or they will break. Serve garnished with the garam masala and chopped coriander to add some freshness to the curry.

Beef Bhuna

SERVES
6

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Marinating 1 hour
Cook 1 hour 30 mins
(If you have a pressure cooker, this will cut your cooking time in half)

This is the ultimate Beef Bhuna recipe, perfect for Ramadan – my dad's absolute favourite and now mine. My mum showed me how to make this and I want you to try it for your family. Bhuna means 'to fry' and here the beef is fried in aromatic spices, such as mustard seeds, nigella seeds and fenugreek, which intensify the flavour. The tomatoes and onions give a rich, thick base to the curry. This is so comforting, hearty and packed full of flavour. Enjoy with Naan (see pages 130-1), Roti (see pages 126-7) or Basmati Rice (see page 132).

Ingredients

1kg beef chunks, with or without bones
2 tablespoons ginger paste
2 tablespoons garlic paste
1 heaped tablespoon ground turmeric

50g plain yogurt

MASALA

6 tablespoons oil
5–6 onions, finely sliced
1 serving of Bhuna Masala, page 169
2 plum tomatoes
500ml water

WHOLE SPICES

1 teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon mustard seeds
2 bay leaves
5–6 cloves
5–6 black peppercorns
3–4 cinnamon sticks
3–4 star anise

GARNISH

2 bullet chillies, sliced
finely chopped fresh coriander

Method

Place the beef in a bowl with the ginger paste, garlic paste, turmeric and yogurt, mix well and leave to marinate in the fridge for 1 hour or overnight.

For the masala, heat the oil in a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the whole spices and fry for about 20 seconds until they start to sizzle. Add the onions and

fry gently until they are meltingly soft, deeply browned and rich. Do not rush this part – this step is important as the overall colour of the curry depends on it and it's one of the key steps in making an amazing curry.

Add the marinated meat, stir well and cook for about 25 minutes on a low heat – the meat will cook in its own juices. When only a little moisture is left, add the Bhuna Masala spices.

Use a knife to make a shallow X on the bottom of the tomatoes, then place in a bowl of boiling water for 40–50 seconds until the skin starts to peel off easily. Skin and finely chop the tomatoes, add to the saucepan and cook for 15 minutes until the tomatoes soften and dissolve, adding texture to the sauce.

Add the water, stir well, cover and cook gently for about 45 minutes or until the water has evaporated and the oil comes through to the top, stirring occasionally.

When the meat is tender, remove the lid, turn up the heat and fry the curry to reduce the sauce to a thick, gravy-like consistency. Serve garnished with sliced bullet chillies and chopped coriander.

Beef Bhuna

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Recipe List

Classic Kachumbar Salad
Watermelon, Feta & Mint Salad
Chana Chaat
Roti
Naan
Basmati Rice
Tomato & Coriander Chutney
Pineapple Chutney
Red Pepper Chutney
Mint & Coriander Yogurt Chutney

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Classic Kachumbar Salad

SERVES
4–5

TIME
Prep 15 minutes

Kachumbar may look like a basic salad, but it is one of the most popular – so refreshing, it adds crunch, colour and texture and makes an appearance with so many dishes, including curries, rice, savouries, burgers and tacos. Kachumbar will brighten up any meal.

Ingredients

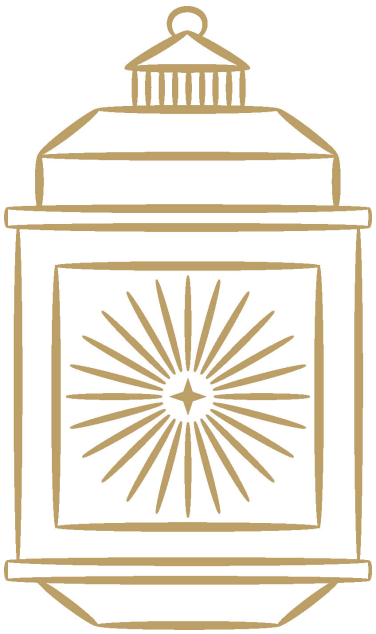
2 tomatoes, finely diced
1 cucumber, finely diced
1 red onion, finely diced
2 tablespoons fresh coriander, chopped
lemon juice, for squeezing
salt
ground black pepper

Method

Place the tomatoes, cucumber, red onion and coriander in a colander and leave to drain for 15 minutes to remove the excess liquid. Transfer to a bowl

and season with salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon just before serving.

TIP Stir a finely chopped fresh chilli in to add some kick to your kachumbar.



Classic Kachumbar Salad

Watermelon, Feta & Mint Salad

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 5 minutes

Absolutely delicious and refreshing, this summery salad combines sweet, juicy cubes of watermelon with salty, creamy feta and crisp and colourful red onions with a sprinkling of fresh, scented mint leaves. Serve alongside Masala Roast Chicken (see page 72).

Ingredients

300g watermelon, rind removed, cubed
40g Kalamata olives
½ small red onion, finely sliced
50g feta cheese, cubed
1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves, finely chopped

Method

Place the watermelon, olives and red onion in a large bowl and give them a gentle toss. Finish off with the feta

and a sprinkling of chopped mint.

TIP Choose a ripe watermelon as the flavour will be better – look for a dark green, dull-looking melon. The heaviest melons are usually the ripest.

Chana Chaat

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep and Cook
25 minutes

Chana Chaat is a tasty, quick and easy-to-assemble vegetarian salad, a popular street food snack which is bursting with flavour. I have used basic spices, tinned chickpeas to give a salty taste, potatoes to add some bite, fresh tomatoes to add sweetness, red onions to give it crunch, yogurt for a creamy texture and tamarind sauce to give it some tang! All the flavours really complement each other so well. There are different variations of chaat but this one can be served alongside any rice dish such as pilau or biryani.

Ingredients

300g potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 x 400g tins of chickpeas, drained
1 large red onion, finely diced
2 fresh tomatoes, finely diced
300g plain yogurt
2 fresh chillies, finely chopped

½ teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon mango powder or chaat masala
½ teaspoon salt

TO SERVE
3 tablespoons tamarind sauce
10g fresh coriander, finely chopped
2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds

Method

Cook the potato cubes in a saucepan of boiling water for 15–20 minutes or until just tender. Drain and set aside to cool.

Place the potato in a large bowl with all the remaining ingredients and mix together well. Serve in bowls, drizzled with tamarind sauce and garnished with chopped coriander and pomegranate seeds to add a pop of colour.

Roti

MAKES
6

TIME
Prep 12 minutes
Cook 20 minutes

Nothing beats the smell of fresh homemade roti – pillow-soft, fluffy, light and airy flatbreads with charred spots adding a subtle flavour and texture. This is a staple in most Indian homes, served with curries to mop up the sauce. I remember standing by my mum's side, eagerly awaiting a fresh roti off the tawa (skillet). She would grab an open packet of butter, fold the wrapping back and spread the actual block as it melted and oozed all over the hot bread – then she'd add a good sprinkling of sugar before rolling it up ready for me to enjoy. I always remember those good days! Now I do exactly the same with my children … and a cheeky one for myself too.

Ingredients

250g chapati flour or wholewheat flour, plus extra for rolling
20g ghee or butter

175–200ml boiling water
oil, for kneading

Method

Place the flour in a large bowl, add the ghee and rub it into the flour with your fingertips for about 3 minutes until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Make a well in the middle of the bowl and slowly pour in boiling water bit by bit, just enough to form a soft dough. Mix with your hands for about a minute until there is no flour left at the bottom of the bowl. The dough shouldn't be too dry or too sticky.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and knead with your hands for 5–8 minutes until it becomes soft and pliable – the longer you knead it, the softer the rotis. You can put a little oil on your hands while kneading so it doesn't stick to your fingers. Divide the dough into 6 equal-sized balls, pop them back in the bowl and cover with a damp cloth to prevent them from drying out.

Roll one of the balls in a little flour and flatten it a bit with your hands. Use a rolling pin to roll it out on a lightly floured surface into a 15–18cm disc, about 2mm thick. Repeat with the other balls of dough.

Heat a tawa, nonstick frying pan or griddle over a high heat until hot. Place a roti on the pan and cook for 30 seconds or until you see tiny dots appear on the

surface. Flip over with a clean kitchen towel or your hand (carefully!) and cook on the other side for 30 seconds. Take a look underneath and if you see golden-brown spots, flip the roti over again and gently press on top with a folded kitchen towel – the whole roti will start to puff up. Wrap the cooked rotis in a clean kitchen towel to keep them warm and soft while you cook the rest.

Leftover rotis can be wrapped in foil and stored in an airtight container for up to 2 days to keep them fresh. You can batch-cook rotis for future use – allow to cool fully, then place the rotis in a plastic bag with baking paper between them and freeze flat in your freezer. When you need them, defrost for 20 minutes and heat one by one on a hot pan.

You can also make roti dough in a stand mixer, using a dough hook.

Naan

MAKES
5

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Rising 1 hour
Cook 4 minutes

These are the fluffiest and softest naan, perfect with any curry. Or you can eat them on their own, just brush with ghee or garlic butter…so buttery and tasty! These Indian-style flatbreads are traditionally made in a tandoor or clay oven, but you can bake them in a hot oven or cook on the hob and watch them puff up right in front of you. Serve warm with stews and curries, such as Butter Chicken (see page 67) and Naan Gosht (see pages 100-1) to mop up the sauce. Delicious!

Ingredients

1 teaspoon sugar
7g dried yeast
125ml warm water
450g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
125g plain yogurt
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon oil

3 tablespoons melted butter
1 teaspoon poppy seeds or sesame seeds

Method

To bloom the yeast, place the sugar, yeast and warm water in a jug, cover with a damp cloth and set aside for 10 minutes until it becomes foamy. This step will make the naan fluffier and softer.

Place the flour in a large bowl, make a well in the middle and pour in the yogurt, salt and oil. Slowly add the yeast mixture a little at a time, mixing as you go. Once the flour is mostly incorporated, use your hands to bring it together into a ball.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and knead with your hands for 10 minutes. Alternatively, knead it in a stand mixer with a dough hook. Pop the dough into a greased bowl, cover with a damp cloth and leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hour, or until the dough doubles in size.

Preheat the oven to 250°C (gas mark 9) or as hot as it will go, and line a baking sheet with baking paper.

Once the dough has risen, knead again on a lightly floured surface for 1 minute, then divide the dough into 5 equal-sized balls. Roll one of the balls in a little flour and flatten it a bit with your hands. Use a rolling pin or your hands to shape it on a lightly floured surface into a

18–20cm oval shape. Repeat with the other balls of dough. Place the naans on the prepared baking sheet, brush with the melted butter and sprinkle with poppy or sesame seeds.

Cook in the oven for 3–4 minutes – they are ready when the naans start to puff up and turn golden brown and the undersides are slightly charred. You can also cook them on the hob. Heat a tawa, nonstick frying pan or griddle over a high heat until hot. Place a naan on the pan and cook for 1–2 minutes until the naan starts to puff up. Flip it over and cook the other side for 1 minute until the bubbles start to turn golden brown. Wrap in a clean kitchen towel to keep them warm and soft until you are ready to eat.

Leftover naans can be wrapped in foil and stored in an airtight container to keep them fresh for up to 2 days.

To make garlic naans, melt 30g of butter with 1 teaspoon of garlic paste and brush over your naans before cooking. Scatter with chopped coriander and bake in the oven.

These naans make a perfect base for naan pizzas – just load up with your favourite toppings before baking!

Basmati Rice

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 5 minutes
Cook 12 minutes

This aromatic white rice has a delicate fluffy texture and is the perfect accompaniment to curries and stir-fries. For perfectly cooked rice, always use a 2:1 water to rice ratio.

Ingredients

125g basmati rice
250ml water
1 bay leaf
1 cinnamon stick
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sunflower oil

Method

Wash the rice in a sieve under cold running water until the water runs clear. This will remove any excess starch,

giving you more separate, fluffy grains.

Place the water in a medium saucepan on a medium heat and add the bay leaf and cinnamon stick to give the rice a nice fragrance. Sprinkle over the salt and pour in the oil to help stop the grains from sticking together. Add the rice, cover and cook for 10–12 minutes until the rice is tender and the liquid has been absorbed, stirring gently halfway through and making sure not to break the grains. Remove the pan from the heat, fluff up the rice with a fork and you're ready to serve.

Add 1–2 star anise to give a sweet, aniseed-like flavour to the rice.

Naan, Roti and Basmati Rice

Tomato & Coriander Chutney

SERVES
4

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 10 minutes

Sweet tomatoes and fresh coriander really complement each other, making this chutney great with just about anything. Fill up some jars and they make a great gift just as Ramadan starts.

Ingredients

4 fresh tomatoes
40g fresh coriander leaves
4 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoon lemon juice
2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon chilli powder
2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 teaspoon garlic paste
4 tablespoons tomato ketchup

4 tablespoons oil
2 teaspoon mustard seeds
2 teaspoon sesame seeds
6–8 curry leaves
salt

Method

Use a knife to make a shallow X on the bottom of the tomatoes, then place in a bowl of boiling water for 40–50 seconds until the skin starts to peel off easily. Skin and cut the tomatoes into quarters, then blitz in a food processor with the fresh coriander until smooth.

Transfer to a medium saucepan with the vinegar, lemon juice, cumin, chilli powder, black pepper, garlic paste and tomato ketchup and season with salt. Bring to the boil, then cook on a low heat for 8–10 minutes until reduced and thickened. Transfer to a bowl.

Heat the oil in a small frying pan on a medium heat, add the mustard seeds, sesame seeds and curry leaves, sizzle for 30–40 seconds, then pour over the chutney. When cool, store in the fridge for up to 7–10 days.

Pineapple Chutney

SERVES
6

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 40 minutes

This is the perfect sweet, spicy and savoury condiment, ideal for serving with pretty much any savoury dish or snack.

Ingredients

900g pineapple, peeled, cored and chopped into chunks
2 teaspoon garlic paste
2 teaspoon ginger paste
1 teaspoon chilli paste
4 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
8–10 cloves
1 teaspoon nigella seeds
6 tablespoons white vinegar
big pinch of ground turmeric
4 tablespoons oil
2 teaspoon mustard seeds
6 dried red chillies

6–8 curry leaves
salt

Method

Place the pineapple chunks in a food processor and blitz until smooth.

Transfer to a medium saucepan with the garlic paste, ginger paste, chilli paste, sugar, ground cardamom, cloves, nigella seeds, vinegar and turmeric and season with salt. Bring to the boil, then cook on a low heat for 30–40 minutes until reduced and thickened. Transfer to a bowl.

Heat the oil in a small frying pan on a medium heat, add the mustard seeds, dried chillies and curry leaves, sizzle for 30–40 seconds, then pour over the chutney. When cool, store in the fridge for up to 7–10 days.

Red Pepper Chutney

SERVES
5

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 10 minutes

The sweetness from the peppers and heat from the chillies makes this a fantastic accompaniment to any fried or baked savouries, such as samosas, spring rolls or pies.

Ingredients

2 red peppers, cut into chunks
2 onions, roughly chopped
2 fresh red chillies
6–8 garlic cloves
4 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoon sugar
4 tablespoons oil
2 teaspoon mustard seeds
6–8 curry leaves
salt

Method

Place the red peppers, onions, red chillies and garlic cloves in a food processor and blitz until smooth.

Transfer to a medium saucepan with the vinegar and sugar and season with salt. Bring to the boil and cook on a low heat for 8–10 minutes until reduced and thickened. Transfer to a bowl.

Heat the oil in a small frying pan on a medium heat, add the mustard seeds and curry leaves, sizzle for 30–40 seconds, then pour over the chutney. When cool, store in the fridge for up to 7–10 days.

Mint & Coriander Yogurt Chutney

SERVES
5

TIME
Prep 15 minutes

This yogurt-based chutney is very similar to raita. The fresh-tasting coriander and zesty, fragrant mint are the perfect combo in this versatile chutney dip.

Ingredients

20g fresh coriander
20g fresh mint leaves
2 fresh green chillies
4 garlic cloves
12 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon ground cumin
salt

Method

Place the coriander, mint, chillies and garlic in a food processor and blitz until finely chopped.

Transfer to a bowl with the yogurt and cumin, stir together and season with salt. Store in the fridge for up to 7–10 days.

Tomato & Coriander Chutney, Pineapple Chutney, Red Pepper Chutney and Mint & Coriander Yogurt Chutney

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Recipe List

Strawberry & Watermelon Refresher
Lemon & Mint Mocktail
Mango & Lychee Refresher
Apple Berry Mocktail
Nutty Chocolate Milkshake
Sweet Yogurt Lassi
Falooda

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Strawberry & Watermelon Refresher

SERVES
1

TIME
Prep 10 minutes

Ramadan tables will usually feature watermelon – it just has to be done. It's so refreshing after a day of fasting, and great for rehydration too. If you have enough, you could so easily make this cooling drink. It's colourful, tropical and looks so good at any occasion or party. The two main ingredients complement each other so well – I hope you agree.

Ingredients

150g seedless watermelon, cubed
250g strawberries, hulled
1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves
1 tablespoon rose syrup
ice, to serve

Method

Place all the ingredients in a blender, saving 1 strawberry for decoration, and blitz until smooth. Serve over ice, with the strawberry to decorate.

Lemon & Mint Mocktail

SERVES
1

TIME
Prep 10 minutes

Such a simple idea for a drink, and so easy that anyone could make it in no time at all. This smells so good and is instantly refreshing with that extra zing! Most of you should have these ingredients in your kitchen, so go ahead and make this today!

Ingredients

½ lime, thinly sliced
½ lemon, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves
1 tablespoon sugar (optional)
sparkling water, to top up
ice cubes, to serve

Method

Place the lime, lemon and mint leaves in a tall glass and add the sugar, if using. Muddle with the tip of a wooden spoon to crush and release the oils and juices.

Top up with sparkling water and add some ice cubes to serve.

Mango & Lychee Refresher

SERVES
1–2

TIME
Prep 10 minutes

With a deliciously fresh and fruity flavour, this light and refreshing summer drink is made with naturally sweet ingredients to jazz up your dinner table.

Ingredients

2 mangoes, peeled and sliced
6 lychees from a tin
1 tablespoon lime juice
300ml lychee juice
ice, to serve

TO DECORATE
pomegranate seeds
lime slices

Method

Place the mangoes, lychees and lime juice in a blender and blitz until smooth. Pour into 1 or 2 glasses over ice,

top up with the lychee juice, then decorate with pomegranate seeds and lime slices.

You could use a sparkling lychee drink or sparkling water instead of the lychee juice if you prefer, to add some bubbles and texture to your drink.

Apple Berry Mocktail

SERVES
1

TIME
Prep 10 minutes

Apples and berries, fizzy and pretty, bold and delicious … what's not to like?

Ingredients

6 blackberries
6 raspberries
½ green apple, finely diced
150ml apple juice
sparkling water or lemonade, to top up
ice cubes, to serve

Method

Place the blackberries, raspberries and apple in a tall glass. Muddle with the tip of a wooden spoon to crush and release the juices. Add the apple juice, top up with sparkling water or lemonade and add some ice cubes to serve.

Strawberry & Watermelon Refresher, Lemon & Mint Mocktail, Mango & Lychee Refresher and Apple Berry Mocktail

Nutty Chocolate Milkshake

SERVES
1

TIME
Prep 15 minutes

This rich and creamy milkshake will be sure to put a big smile on the face of any child or adult – and that's before you even take your first sip! Why not get your kids involved with the decoration?

Ingredients

2 scoops of vanilla ice cream
250ml milk
125ml double cream
4 strawberries
6 hazelnut chocolates (I use Ferrero Rochers)

DECORATION
chocolate sauce
whipped cream
strawberries
1–2 hazelnut chocolates (I use Ferrero Rochers)

Method

Place the ice cream in a blender with the milk, double cream, strawberries and chocolates and blend until smooth.

Drizzle some chocolate sauce inside a tall glass for decoration, before pouring in the milkshake. Top with whipped cream and decorate with strawberries and extra whole chocolates.

Sweet Yogurt Lassi

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 10 minutes

Sweet Lassi is a yogurt-based beverage, sweetened with sugar and flavoured with cardamom. It's a popular drink which is usually served with rice dishes, such as pilau and biryani. Every time I make biryani, I always have to make lassi as my children will not have biryani without it.

Ingredients

400ml plain or Greek yogurt
3 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
about 50ml milk

Method

Place all the ingredients in a large jug and mix well with a hand whisk for 1–2 minutes until nice and frothy. Add

a little extra milk if it's too thick for you. Pour into 2 glasses and serve with your biryani.

For Sweet & Sour Lassi, add a little green chilli paste to the drink. Then you get the best of both worlds!

Falooda

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 45 minutes
Cook 20 minutes
Chill 1 hour

This traditional, ultimate Indian drink has exciting layers of flavour and textures and is the beverage of choice on any iftar table at the end of a fasting day, or any day for that matter. It has a creamy flavour, delicately perfumed with rose, and a nice dollop of ice cream to make it extra cooling. It's quite a major part of Middle Eastern and Indian culture, from the villages of the subcontinent to homes here in the UK! It looks so pretty and exotic in pink, don't you think?

Ingredients

½ teaspoon basil seeds (tukmaria)
100ml water
500ml full-fat milk
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons double cream
½ teaspoon ground cardamom

2 tablespoons rose syrup, plus extra to decorate
2 tablespoons falooda vermicelli, soaked in water to soften
2 scoops of vanilla ice cream
1 teaspoon chopped pistachios and almonds

FALOODA JELLY

125ml water
1 teaspoon falooda powder
1–2 drops of pink food colouring

Method

For the falooda jelly, place the water, falooda powder and pink food colouring in a small saucepan on a medium heat and bring to the boil. Pour into a heatproof dish and leave to set until firm.

Soak the basil seeds in the water for 30 minutes – they will start to swell up. Drain through a tea strainer to remove excess water and set aside.

Pour the milk into a large saucepan on a medium heat and bring to the boil. Add the sugar and boil for 1 minute, stirring all the time so that the milk doesn't stick to the pan and burn. Once boiled, cool and chill in the fridge for 1 hour.

Add the cream and ground cardamom to the chilled milk and whisk together. Grate the falooda jelly using a

coarse grater.

Divide the rose syrup between 2 tall glasses and add the soaked vermicelli and basil seeds. Pour in the milk, which will change the colour to a subtle pink. Add 1 tablespoon of grated falooda jelly to each glass, then top with the ice cream and chopped nuts, and drizzle a little rose syrup on top to decorate.

Rose syrup can be quite sweet, so adjust the amount of sugar you add to the milk accordingly.

If you are short on time, you don't have to boil the milk but it does give the falooda a richer, thicker and creamier taste.

Falooda

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Recipe List

Lemon & Cardamom Cupcakes
Mango Falooda Dessert
Saffron Nan Khatai
School Dinner Cake
Phirni Rice Dessert
Pink Lamingtons
Gulab Jamun
Rose & Pistachio Milk Cake

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Lemon & Cardamom Cupcakes

SERVES
2

TIME
Prep 40 minutes
Cook 20 minutes

These cupcakes are super-moist, light and fluffy – bursting with zesty, zingy lemon and cardamom adding a sweet, spicy aroma. This is my favourite combo in a cupcake.

Ingredients

125g butter or margarine at room temperature
125g caster sugar
125g self-raising flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
2 eggs
1 tablespoon milk
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
½ teaspoon ground cardamom, plus extra to decorate

LEMON CREAM

300ml double cream

2–3 heaped tablespoons lemon curd

Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C (gas mark 3) and line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.

Place all the cake ingredients in a bowl and mix everything together with an electric hand whisk until just smooth, making sure not to overmix. Divide the mixture equally between the cupcake cases and cook in the oven for 18–20 minutes until they are golden brown in colour and spring back when pressed. Leave the cupcakes to cool completely on a wire rack.

To make the lemon cream, pour the cream into a large bowl, add the lemon curd and whisk until soft peaks form. Fill a piping bag with a closed star nozzle and pipe the cream over the cupcakes to form a swirl. Sprinkle a little ground cardamom on top to finish off.

Any leftover cream-topped cupcakes can be stored in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Lemon & Cardamom Cupcakes

Mango Falooda Dessert

SERVES
9–10

TIME
Prep 25 minutes
Cook 20 minutes
Chill 3 hours

Dessert is a must for iftar during Ramadan in our house. Whether it's ice cream, jelly or fresh fruits, something sweet is on the table to enjoy after the main meal. I normally make a rose version of this dessert, but this Mango Falooda is just as delicious – I absolutely love mangoes. This dessert is so creamy, soft and light and totally melts in your mouth.

Ingredients

1 litre full-fat milk
2 tablespoons custard powder
2 tablespoons milk powder
2½ teaspoons falooda powder
400g tin of mango pulp
6 tablespoons double cream
200g condensed milk
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom

DECORATION
mango chunks

pomegranate seeds
chopped pistachios
pinch of saffron threads

Method

Set aside 150ml of the milk and pour the rest into a large saucepan on a low heat. Heat gently until the milk starts to simmer – this may take up to 20 minutes. Keep an eye on the milk and give it an occasional stir.

Place the reserved milk in a jug with the custard powder, milk powder and falooda powder and mix until smooth. Add this mixture to the hot milk and stir on a gentle heat. You will notice the milk will start to thicken. With the heat still on low, add the mango pulp, double cream, condensed milk and ground cardamom and mix everything to combine.

Pour into individual dessert bowls or into a large dish, allow to cool, then chill in the fridge for 3 hours to set. Decorate with mango chunks, pomegranate seeds, chopped pistachios and a few saffron threads before serving.

This dessert will happily keep in the fridge for 1–2 days, so you can prepare it ahead of time and decorate it just before serving.

Falooda is a setting agent, sometimes called agar agar or China grass.

Mango Falooda Dessert

Saffron Nan Khatai

MAKES
30

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 12 minutes

Nan khatai is a traditional Indian shortbread and my absolute fave! When I was growing up, my mum would make a huge batch of these for Eid – the aroma of freshly baked Nan Khatai would fill the house. The name comes from the Persian word naan which means 'bread', and khatai which means 'light and flaky'. Typically made with ghee, flour, sugar and cardamom, these are crisp and crumbly on the outside with a slight chewiness in the middle. A perfect sweet treat for special occasions.

Ingredients

125g caster sugar
125g ghee
4 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon saffron threads
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 tablespoon fine semolina
125g ground almonds
1 tablespoon chickpea flour

½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
about 280g plain flour

DECORATION
glacé cherries
chopped almonds
pistachios
dried rose petals

Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C (gas mark 3) and line a baking tray with baking paper.

Place the sugar and ghee in a bowl and use a whisk to cream them together for 2–3 minutes until light and fluffy. Add the oil and whisk for a further 40 seconds.

Place the saffron threads in a small frying pan on a very low heat and warm through, taking care as the strands burn easily. When slightly crisp, crush with the back of a spoon and add to the creamed mixture with the ground cardamom to give both aromatic and sweet spicy flavour.

Add the semolina and ground almonds to provide a crunchy and crisp texture, and the chickpea flour for a slight nutty taste. Add the baking powder and bicarbonate of soda to add a little rise and some cracks on top of the shortbread during baking – that's

when you know you have a good Nan Khatai. Finally, add just enough flour to make a soft and pliable dough.

Roll the dough into small balls, about 3.5cm across, and place on the prepared baking tray, spacing them a little apart as they do spread during baking. Decorate them with glacé cherries, chopped almonds, pistachios or dried rose petals, then cook in the oven for 12 minutes. They will crack slightly on top as they bake and turn lightly golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes to firm up slightly, then cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container in a cool place for up to 2–3 weeks.

Saffron Nan Khatai

School Dinner Cake

SERVES
25

TIME
Prep 30 minutes
Cook 30 minutes

This retro vanilla traybake is an easy bake for celebrations and parties and brings back fond memories of school. I remember rushing in at break time to join the queue for a slice of this, devouring each and every crumb. The sponge is incredibly fluffy and soft, the simple glacé icing gives it just the right amount of sweetness and the rainbow sprinkles add that pop of colour. This one is definitely a crowd-pleaser.

Ingredients

225g butter or margarine at room temperature
225g caster sugar
4 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
225g self-raising flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
3 tablespoons milk
rainbow sprinkles, to decorate

GLACE ICING

300g icing sugar
2–3 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C (gas mark 3) and grease and line a 20cm square cake tin with baking paper.

Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy using an electric hand whisk or wooden spoon. Beat in the eggs and stir in the vanilla extract. Fold in the flour and baking powder using a large metal spoon, then add the milk to create a smooth batter, taking care not to overmix.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared cake tin and gently spread out with a spatula. Cook in the oven for 25–30 minutes until golden brown and coming away from the edges of the tin. A skewer inserted into the middle should come out clean.

Set aside to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out, peel off the paper and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

For the glacé icing, sift the icing sugar into a bowl and gradually add the milk, a little at a time, until the icing becomes thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. If necessary, adjust the consistency with a few drops

more milk or a little more icing sugar. The icing should be smooth and glossy. Add the vanilla, if using, then pour the icing over the cooled cake, using a spoon to guide it to the edges. Finish off with rainbow sprinkles.

Allow the icing to set, then cut the cake into 4cm squares. Store any leftover cake in an airtight container for up to 3–4 days.

Phirni Rice Dessert

SERVES
5

TIME
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 20 minutes
Setting 1–2 hours

Phirni is a classic Indian dessert, so light and creamy and made with just a few simple ingredients. I remember making this with my grandmother in Ramadan – the aroma while the mixture started to bubble, pouring out the mixture into small bowls, then setting them to chill in the fridge, ready just in time for iftar.

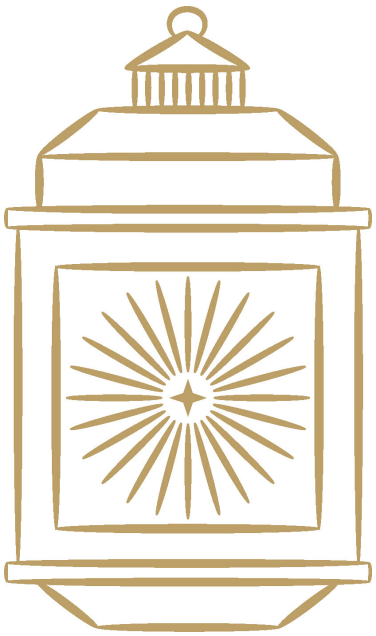
Ingredients

600ml full-fat milk
4 tablespoons rice flour
½ teaspoon rose extract
3–4 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon desiccated coconut
½ teaspoon ground cardamom

Method

Place the milk, rice flour, rose extract and sugar in a large saucepan on a medium heat. Bring the mixture to the boil, stirring all the time so it doesn't get lumpy or stick to the pan. This can take about 20 minutes. The consistency should be thick like custard.

Pour into small dessert bowls, sprinkle with the coconut and ground cardamom and pop into the fridge to set for 1–2 hours. Serve chilled.



Pink Lamingtons

MAKES
25

TIME
Prep 45 minutes
Cook 30 minutes

Scrumptiously soft and fluffy sponge cake, dipped in jelly and coated in desiccated coconut, these pretty pink sponge squares are something I make every Eid to share with family and friends. You can dress them up with a bit of buttercream and a cheeky dollop of jam or have them just as they are.

Ingredients

225g butter or margarine at room temperature
225g caster sugar
4 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
225g self-raising flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
3 tablespoons milk
200g desiccated coconut
raspberry jam, for filling

JELLY ICING

70g raspberry or strawberry jelly crystals (I recommend Ahmed Foods brand)
400ml boiling water (or as much needed to create the consistency of single cream)
2 tablespoons icing sugar

BUTTERCREAM

150g butter at room temperature
300g icing sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon milk (optional)

Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C (gas mark 3) and grease and line a 20cm square cake tin with baking paper.

Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy using an electric hand whisk or wooden spoon. Beat in the eggs and stir in the vanilla extract. Fold in the flour and baking powder using a large metal spoon, then add the milk to create a smooth batter, taking care not to overmix.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared cake tin and gently spread out with a spatula. Cook in the oven for 25–30 minutes until golden brown and coming away from the edges of the tin. A skewer inserted into the middle should come out clean.

Set aside to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out, peel off the paper and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

For the jelly icing, dissolve the jelly crystals by gradually adding boiling water in a shallow bowl until it reaches the consistency of single cream. Then add the icing sugar and stir until dissolved. Place the desiccated coconut in another shallow bowl.

Cut the cake into 4cm squares and dip each piece into the jelly icing to cover, then toss in the coconut to coat. Place the coated cakes on a wire rack over a tray to allow any excess icing to drip away and leave to set.

For the buttercream, beat all the ingredients together for 3–4 minutes until soft and creamy, adding the milk if the buttercream is too thick. Place the buttercream in a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle.

Cut the lamingtons in half, spread with a layer of raspberry jam, pipe buttercream on top and sandwich them back together. Store in an airtight container for up to 2–3 days at room temperature or a week in the fridge.

The lamingtons can also be sandwiched with whipped cream if you prefer.

Pink Lamingtons

Gulab Jamun

MAKES
28

TIME
Prep 20 minutes
Cook 25 minutes

Gulab Jamun is a classic Indian sweet treat enjoyed at all celebratory occasions. These soft syrup-soaked balls are an absolute delight and will surely satisfy your sweet cravings.

Ingredients

200g condensed milk
1½ tablespoons plain yogurt
1 egg yolk
1½ tablespoons ghee
2 tablespoons fine semolina
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
130g plain flour
50g self-raising flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
oil, for deep-frying
100g desiccated coconut

SUGAR SYRUP
250g granulated sugar

250ml water
½ teaspoon rose extract
For the sugar syrup, place all the ingredients in large saucepan on a medium heat and cook until the sugar dissolves. This could take 20 minutes. Reduce the heat and simmer gently until the syrup turns slightly sticky. Set aside.

Method

For the sugar syrup, place all the ingredients in large saucepan on a medium heat and cook until the sugar dissolves. This could take 20 minutes. Reduce the heat and simmer gently until the syrup turns slightly sticky. Set aside.

Place the condensed milk in a bowl with the yogurt, egg yolk, ghee, semolina and ground cardamom and mix it all together. Sift in the plain flour, self-raising flour and baking powder and bring together into a soft dough.

Divide the dough into 28 equal-sized balls and roll each in the palms of your hands into an oval shape about 4cm long.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan on a low-medium heat. Lower a few jamun into the oil at a time and fry for about 2 minutes, making sure not to

overcrowd the pan because they will increase in size. It's important to fry the jamuns on low heat – if the oil is too hot, the jamuns will brown on the outside and stay raw in the middle. Keep stirring gently to fry them evenly so they are golden brown all over.

Carefully remove from the oil with a slotted spoon, drain well and place in the saucepan with the warm sugar syrup. Leave to soak in the syrup for about 1 minute, then remove them and toss in desiccated coconut to coat.

Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3–4 days.

Gulab Jamun

Rose & Pistachio Milk Cake

SERVES
6–7

TIME
Prep 35 minutes
Cook 25 minutes
Resting 3 hours

Also known as Rose & Pistachio Tres Leches or Three-milk Cake, this is the perfect dessert to pretty up your table. Trust me, it's so easy, tastes absolutely heavenly and looks so good. This is an incredibly indulgent, sophisticated and moreish dessert and you just can't say no to it!

Ingredients

4 eggs, separated
160g granulated sugar
2 tablespoons rose syrup
40ml milk
160g self-raising flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon ground cardamom

ROSE MILK
410g tin of evaporated milk
200ml full-fat milk
200ml double cream

150g condensed milk
1 tablespoon rose syrup
pinch of ground cardamom

TOPPING
300ml double cream
1–2 tablespoons rose syrup
chopped pistachios
dried rose petals
pinch of ground cardamom

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4) and line a 28 x18cm shallow heatproof dish with baking paper.

Place the egg yolks in a large bowl with half the sugar and whisk with an electric hand whisk on medium speed until thick and pale in colour. Whisk in the rose syrup – this will instantly change the colour of the mixture and give an amazing flavour to the sponge. Add the milk and sift in the flour and baking powder. Add the ground cardamom and gently fold in until just combined.

Place the egg whites in another large bowl with the remaining sugar. Clean and dry the whisk, then whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Carefully fold the egg whites into the egg yolk mixture until fully combined, taking care not to knock out too much of the air.

Pour the mixture into the prepared dish and cook in the oven for 25 minutes, or until the sponge is golden brown in colour and springs back when pressed.

For the rose milk, mix all the ingredients together in a jug. Use a skewer to poke holes all over the cake, then slowly pour most of the milk mixture over the top, reserving a little for serving. Refrigerate for a few hours or overnight to allow the cake to soak up the milk.

For the topping, whisk the cream and rose syrup together until soft peaks form, then spread over the cake. Decorate with chopped pistachios, rose petals and a sprinkling of ground cardamom. Cut the cake into squares and serve with the remaining rose milk.

Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3–4 days.

Rose & Pistachio Milk Cake

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My Desi Pantry

These are the most commonly used ingredients in Indian cooking and in this book.

- **Bay leaves**
  Usually added at the beginning of cooking, they release flavour and infuse the dish with a floral and herbal scent.

- **Black peppercorns**
  Woody and pungent, used in most savoury dishes, ground or whole.

- **Cardamom (*elaichi*)**
  With an earthy, bittersweet taste and aroma, cardamom is used in both sweet and savoury dishes. It comes in both whole (pod) and powdered (ground) forms. For curries and rice dishes, it's typical to use cardamom pods, but ground cardamom is great for sweet dishes or desserts.

- **Carom seeds (*ajwain*)**
  Little seeds with a pungent, sharp, herby taste and smell.

- **Chickpea flour (*besan*, gram flour)**
  Perfect for making batter, especially for deep-frying. Commonly used to make pakoras.

- **Chilli paste (*lila mircha*)**
  Adds a kick and a fresh flavour to your dishes. I like to make my own paste by blitzing fresh chillies in a food processor, but you can also buy jars of chilli paste which will work just as well.

- **Chilli powder (*lal mircha*)**
  A key ingredient in many Indian dishes, adding heat to your food. Adjust the quantity according to your or your family's preference.

- **Chillies, fresh *(lila mircha)***
  There's a huge variety of chillies available to buy. My family always used bird's eye chillies and so these are the ones I always have ready to use. They have a nice level of heat. I like to use a mix of red and green ones in my cooking. However, for garnishes, I'll use

Jalapeño chillies because they're normally less spicy.

- **Cinnamon (*tuj*)**
  Available as sticks or in ground form, cinnamon is the bark of a tree and has a sweet flavour and woody fragrance, used in both savoury and sweet dishes.

- **Cloves (*laung*)**
  Sweet, warm, woody and fragrant, cloves are added to curries and rice dishes.

- **Coriander, fresh *(lila dhania)***
  A fresh leafy herb with a fragrant, citrus flavour, perfect as a garnish for many dishes. Adds freshness to savouries and curries.

- **Coriander, ground (*dhania*)**
  A key ingredient in many Indian dishes with its fresh-tasting, lemony flavour. It is mildly sweet and aromatic and added to curries, rice dishes and savouries.

- **Cumin, ground (*jeera*)**
  Another key ingredient in many Indian dishes. It has a warm, earthy and bittersweet taste

and is used frequently in curries, rice dishes and savouries.

- **Curry leaves (*kaddi patta*)**
  Most often sizzled (tempered) first in oil to release their natural flavours and sweet pungent aroma, curry leaves appear in many dishes.

- **Dill, fresh**
  A grass-like herb, slightly tangy and often used in seafood dishes, sauces and soups. Used in limited quantities to avoid overpowering a dish.

- **Fenugreek leaves (*kasturi methi*)**
  Slightly bitter, earthy leaves used to enhance flavour and aroma. Available fresh or dried.

- **Falooda powder (agar agar, China grass)**
  A thickening or setting agent used as a vegetarian substitute for gelatine in desserts and puddings.

- **Fennel seeds (*saunf*)**
  Green seeds with an aniseed-like flavour and

warm sweet aroma, used in sweet and savoury dishes.

- **Garam masala**
  A warm, fragrant spice blend, used in rice and curries. Used in limited quantities to avoid overpowering a dish.

- **Garlic**
  A key ingredient in many Indian dishes. When raw it has an intense, pungent and unique flavour and aroma but after cooking it mellows down and is mild and sweet. If you have time, nothing beats using fresh garlic cloves either crushed or finely chopped. However, if you don't have time for this, you can buy pre-prepared jars of chopped garlic that are brilliant.

- **Ghee (clarified butter)**
  With its rich, nutty and buttery flavour, ghee can be used in sweet or savoury dishes. If you can't find ghee, use unsalted butter instead.

- **Ginger**
  A key ingredient in many Indian dishes, ginger is so versatile and can be added to curries,

rice, savouries and beverages. Ginger has a pungent, spicy aroma and zingy taste. As with garlic, if you have time, fresh ginger will have more flavour, however, jarred versions can work just as well. Few recipes for Ramadan use ground ginger, so this type of ginger doesn't feature much.

- **Kashmiri chilli powder**
  A mild chilli powder with a bright red colour.

- **Mango powder (*amchor*)**
  Dried, ground mango, adding a sour, tangy and slightly sweet undertone to dishes.

- **Mint, fresh**
  A highly aromatic herb with a subtle, sweet taste, adding a cool freshness to your dishes.

- **Mogo (*cassava*)**
  A root vegetable with a subtle taste that is slightly sweet, earthy and nutty. Tastes amazing when cooked with strong-flavoured ingredients. I tend to use frozen mogo as it's much more convenient, but if you can find

fresh in your local supermarket or street market, then that tastes even better.

- **Mustard seeds**
  Little round seeds with a pungent, nutty taste, typically used when tempering.

- **Nigella seeds (*kalonji*)**
  Also known as black onion seeds, these are strong, nutty and have a slightly bitter aroma. They are often added to curries and rice dishes or as a garnish.

- **Onions**
  A key ingredient for most dishes and a staple veg in Indian cooking. With their pungent, punchy, sharp flavour and strong distinct smell, onions are the perfect base for all curries, adding texture to the sauce.

- **Paneer**
  Similar to cottage cheese, paneer has a milky, creamy flavour. It is bland in taste, but perfect for recipes with spices as it absorbs all the flavours.

- **Paprika**
  A ground spice made from a mixture of dried peppers. The flavour can be anything from sweet and mild, to spicy and hot. It adds a bright reddish colour and a pleasant pepper aroma.

- **Peri-peri seasoning**
  A sour, sweet and salty blend of spices, perfect for marinating.

- **Rice flour**
  A good thickening agent for soups, rice flour is finer than wheat flour. It is often used in fried foods or tempura batter to coat seafood, chicken or vegetables and the results are crispy, weightless and tender.

- **Samosa leaves (samosa pastry, *pur*)**
  Available in packets, samosa leaves are rectangles of thin pastry used to make samosas and become very crispy when fried. They can be found in most Indian grocery shops. You'll need to look in the freezer section for these as they are only available frozen.

- **Saffron (*kesar*)**
  The brilliant yellow stamens of a crocus, saffron adds colour and aroma to both sweet and savoury dishes. When possible, try to use threads of saffron instead of powder – it's higher quality and so gives a better flavour.

- **Semolina (*sooji*)**
  Semolina flour has a slightly nutty, sweet taste and a coarse texture. It is used in sweet and savoury dishes.

- **Sesame seeds (*tal*)**
  White oval-shaped seeds with a mild, sweet, nutty taste. Great as a garnish, sprinkled over savoury dishes and snacks.

- **Star anise**
  Pretty star-shaped seed pods with a slightly sweet aroma and flavour like aniseed or liquorice.

- **Tandoori masala**
  A strong red spice mixture, adding a lovely vibrant colour and warm spicy flavour to your dishes.

- **Tomatoes, fresh or tinned**
  Tomatoes are essential in making the masala base for many curries, making the dish saucy and adding a tangy sweetness. In the recipes, I've specified when best to use fresh or tinned (and sometimes use both!). This is because each type gives a different flavour, texture and colour to the dish.

- **Turmeric, ground (*arad, haldi*)**
  A key ingredient in many Indian dishes, ground turmeric is the dried and powdered root of a plant in the ginger family. It adds an immediate, intense, mustardy yellow colour to your dishes. Used in limited quantities.

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My Favourite Spice Mixes

I love to have some of my favourite and most used spice blends ready to go in my cupboard to save time when I'm cooking. All these mixes use spices you can easily find in your local supermarket, and if you double or even triple the quantities below, they'll keep in an airtight container for months.

I use these mixes for several recipes in this book but they're also great as a rub over some vegetables that you're pan-frying, or on meats that you're barbecuing or grilling. You can even cook the spices for a couple of minutes in some oil in a pan, and then add to cooked rice and leftover veg for a quick, simple meal that's packed with flavour.

Perfect Curry Spice Mix

This is a brilliant spice blend for a simply delicious curry. It's really versatile and so I always have a pot ready made in my store cupboard.

1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon garam masala
½ teaspoon salt

Bhuna Masala

Bhuna is a dry curry with a medium-hot heat. This is the perfect spice blend for any type of Bhuna.

1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 tablespoons ground coriander
1 tablespoon Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tablespoon chilli flakes
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon nigella seeds
1 teaspoon dried fenugreek leaves
1 tablespoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon store-bought tandoori masala
1 teaspoon salt

Meat Biryani Masala

This masala is slightly different to the veg one, but means it goes well with meat dishes. Chicken, beef and lamb are our favourites.

1 tablespoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon garam masala
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground coriander

Vegetable Biryani Masala

`Masala' here simply means a mixture of spices. This one is perfect for veg-based dishes.

2 teaspoons chilli powder
1 teaspoon Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon garam masala
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground turmeric

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